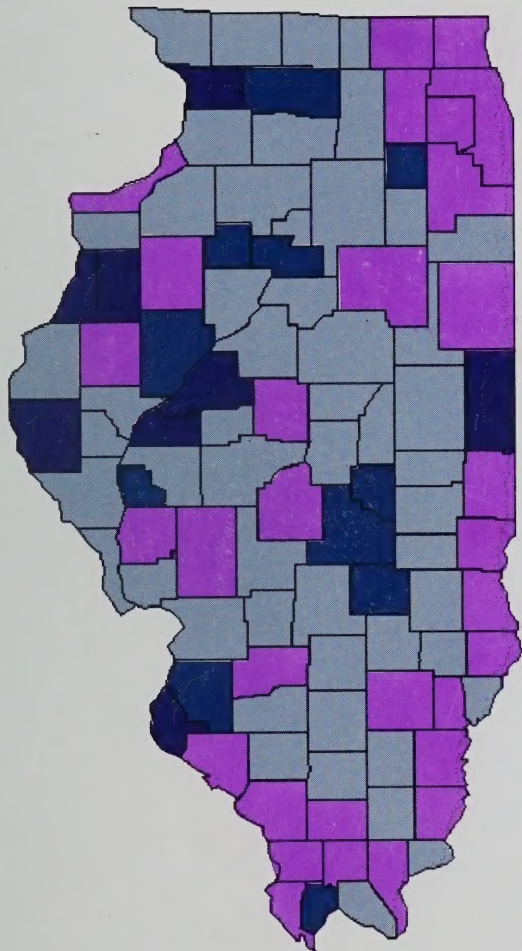


THE 1988 ILLINOIS POLICY SURVEY



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**The
1988
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**Citizens'
Views on
State
Issues**

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DeKalb, Illinois 60115
March 1989

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Table of Contents

List of Figures / ii
List of Tables / iv
Preface / v
Executive Summary / vi
Introduction / 1
Most Important Problem for Illinois / 2
Personal Financial Situation / 7
State Spending Priorities / 11
Tax Issues / 17
Evaluation of State Educational Institutions / 23
Current Issues / 26
Political Issues / 36
References / 46
Appendix 1 - Methodology / 47
Appendix 2 - Regional Map of Illinois / 48
Appendix 3 - Interviewers / 50

List of Figures

1. Citizens' Perceptions of the Most Important Problem Facing Illinois / 2
2. Change in Citizens' Perceptions of the Most Important Problem: 1984-1988 / 3
 3. Number of Service Areas Spending Increase Wanted / 12
 4. Support for Spending Increases for Eight Service Areas / 13
 5. First Priority for Spending Increase / 14
6. Support for Spending Increases for Eight State Services: 1984-1988 / 15
 7. Evaluation of State and Local Taxes / 17
8. Acceptability of Three Possible Tax Increases: 1987 and 1988 / 18
 9. Most Acceptable Tax Increase / 19
10. Levels of Support for Income Tax Increase Earmarked for Education / 20
11. Levels of Support for Higher Education Share of Income Tax Increase / 21
 12. Does Constituent Know Position of Own State Legislators on Income Tax Increase for Education? / 22
 13. Evaluation of Educational Institutions / 23
 14. Water Priority during Drought / 27
15. Funding of Mass Transportation and Highways / 27
16. Should State Regulate Language of Insurance Policies? / 29
 17. Limit Governor to Two Terms / 30
 18. Selection of State Judges / 32
 19. Should Drugs Be Legalized? / 33
20. Is Pledge of Allegiance Good Idea for Students / 34
21. Should Government Require Student Recitation of Pledge? / 35
 22. 1988 Ratings of Public Officials / 36

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23. Ratings of Public Officials: 1984-1988
Percent Rating Good or Excellent / 37

24. Ratings of Governor Thompson: 1984-1988 / 38

25. Ratings of the Illinois General Assembly: 1984-1988 / 39

26. Most Faith and Confidence in Three Levels of Government: 1968-1988 / 40

27. Which Level of Government Gives the Most for
Tax Money: 1988 Illinois and National Samples / 43

List of Tables

1. Top Three Problems in Illinois by Demographic Groups / 5
2. Perception of Personal Financial Condition in One Year
1984-1988 / 7
3. Perception of Personal Financial Condition in One Year by Demographic Groups / 9
4. Spending Preferences for Eight State Service Areas / 11
5. Spending Preferences for Education by Perception of Number One State Problem / 14
6. Evaluation of State Educational Institutions / 24
7. Opinion on Funding of Mass Transportation and Highways / 28
8. State or Company Regulation of the Language of Insurance Policies / 30
9. Limiting Governor to Two Terms / 31
10. Election or Appointment of State Judges / 33
11. Most Faith and Confidence in Three Levels of Government by Demographic Groups / 41
12. Most for Tax Money from Which Level of Government / 44

Preface

The *Illinois Policy Survey* is a continuing program in the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University. It is designed to provide leaders with systematic and representative information on public attitudes, values, and expectations with respect to the performance of the state government and important policy issues facing the state. In preparing this report, we are cognizant of the fact that public preferences are but one set of considerations in policy making.

Sampling and data collection services were provided by the Public Opinion Laboratory under the direction of Paul Gough. We owe a great debt to the POL interviewers who spent over 300 hours talking to the people of Illinois and recording their conversations. Appendix 3 acknowledges the efforts of this dedicated and hardworking staff.

Members of the Center staff who also contributed significantly to this project include Kathleen Shankman (production coordination), Breck Thennes (graphics and manuscript production), and Wang Sheng-Shing (computing).

We would also like to thank the Illinois House and Senate Leadership staff who helped us sort through the issues on the Illinois legislative agenda. Their assistance is much appreciated.

Executive Summary

The 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* examines a variety of topics that relate to policy issues currently facing the state or that describe public opinion in policy-relevant areas. In particular, public attitudes about the quality and funding of public and higher education in Illinois are explored.

Most Important Problem for Illinois

For the second year in a row Illinois residents see education as the state's most important problem. This is in sharp contrast to the first three years of the *Illinois Policy Survey*, when economic issues, especially unemployment, dominated the list of concerns.

- Education is seen as the state's number one problem; it was cited by 24 percent of the respondents.
- Taxes and spending are the major concern of 18 percent of the state's citizens.
- 15 percent are most concerned about unemployment.
- 9 percent cite social problems as the major state issue.
- Only 8 percent are unable to volunteer a major problem facing the state of Illinois.

Personal Financial Situation

As a group, Illinoisans were more optimistic about their short-term financial future in 1988 than in 1985 or 1986. Most state residents think they will be at least as well off financially in one year as they are today. Blacks, those over the age of 60, downstaters, and individuals with lower levels of education and income are, however, less optimistic than others.

- About a third of Illinois residents think their personal financial condition will improve in the next year.
- Over half think their personal condition will stay the same in the next year, and only 11 percent think they will be worse off.

State Spending Priorities

Citizens rarely want to see spending levels decreased in the eight basic state services about which they were questioned. Two-thirds want to see spending increased in four or more areas. Overwhelmingly, aspects of education dominate spending preferences for Illinois citizens.

- 77 percent of the state's citizens think spending should be increased for *public schools* (kindergarten through high school).
- 62 percent want to see spending increased for state-supported *higher education*.
- A strong majority--61 percent--also want spending increased in another area of education, that of *job training* for the unemployed.
- A majority (51 percent) support increased state spending for *low income families* with children.
- 50 percent also endorse increased state spending for *environmental protection*.
- The remaining three service areas each receive less than majority support for a spending increase. These are *economic development*--48 percent; *prisons*--41 percent; and *state highways and roads*--37 percent.

Tax Issues

Illinois citizens perceive the state income tax as their least burdensome major tax. Only a third see it as currently too high, and it is the most acceptable if there has to be a tax increase. Acceptability of a state income tax increase has risen considerably since 1987.

- Acceptability of an increase in the state income tax climbed from 38 percent in 1987 to 62 percent in 1988.

If an income tax increase were to be earmarked for education, it could be supported by an overwhelming 89 percent of the state's citizens.

- 36 percent of Illinois citizens *strongly* favor an income tax increase earmarked for education.
- Another 29 percent favor the earmarked increase.
- 24 percent more would favor an earmarked tax increase if they thought it would mean improved education quality.
- Altogether, 89 percent of the state's citizens could support an income tax increase for education.

Most of the unqualified supporters are personally willing to pay a higher income tax for education. Most state residents want a tax for education to be used for both public schools and public colleges and universities. The results of the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* show that most citizens would accept a tax increase for education and even welcome it.

Evaluation of State Educational Institutions

Illinois residents tend to perceive their own local public schools as performing at a higher level than the state's schools in general. A majority think their own schools do an excellent or good job, but only about a third feel the same way about schools in the rest of the state. Blacks and Chicagoans are approximately as negative about their own local schools as they are about Illinois public schools in general. The state's institutions of higher education receive the highest proportion of excellent and good evaluations.

- 69 percent of Illinois residents evaluate the state's public colleges and universities as excellent or good.
- 58 percent think their own community public schools (kindergarten through high school) are excellent or good.
- Only 35 percent rank state public schools in general in the excellent or good category.
- Almost one in five Illinoisans thinks the local public school or state public schools in general offer poor or very poor quality education.

Current Issues

Illinois citizens disagree about water priorities during a time of drought and whether the language of insurance policies should be regulated by the state or left to the companies themselves. There seems to be general agreement, however, that contrary to the current practice of funding mass transportation in the Chicago area and downstate highways in tandem, each should be separately funded. There also appears to be general agreement that state judges should continue to be elected by the voters. There has been a gradual increase over the years in support of limiting the governor to two terms in office.

- Exactly half the survey respondents say the sometimes confusing language of insurance policies should be regulated by the state, 45 percent say it should be left to the insurance companies, and 5 percent are uncertain.
- 65 percent of Illinoisans think funding for Chicago mass transportation and downstate highways should be done separately.
- 67 percent of Illinoisans prefer continued popular election of state judges. Only 3 percent want to see judges appointed by the governor and 28 percent by a special commission.
- 62 percent of Illinoisans would limit the governor of the state to two terms in office. This is up from 48 percent in 1985 and 58 percent in 1987.

In surveying opinion on two items with a national focus, the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* found, first, that most Illinoisans oppose the legalization of street drugs. Opposition falls fairly substantially, however, when the possibility that legalization will reduce crime is introduced. Secondly, Illinois citizens show that they deeply revere the patriotic symbolism of the flag and its pledge, but they do not want the government telling them how to show their patriotism.

- More than 80 percent of Illinois residents say they are opposed to the legalization of drugs such as marijuana, heroine, or cocaine. But opposition drops to a bare majority of 50.4 percent if citizens are convinced that drug legalization would result in a lower crime rate.
- 85 percent of the state's residents over the age of 17 think recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools is a good thing. But 73 percent also think the government should not require students to say it.

Political Issues

Respondents to the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* were asked to rate President Reagan, Governor Thompson, the United States Congress, and the Illinois General Assembly.

- 50 percent of Illinois citizens think President Reagan did a good or excellent job in 1988.
- 34 percent feel Governor Thompson did a good or excellent job in 1988.
- Most Illinois citizens think Congress is doing either a good job (32 percent) or a fair job (49 percent).
- The majority of Illinoisans think the General Assembly is doing either a good job (26 percent) or a fair job (39 percent).
- Almost one in five citizens, however, does not feel informed enough to evaluate the work of the state's legislative body.

The 1988 state poll also queried respondents about their comparative perceptions of three levels of government--national, state, and local. A plurality of Illinois citizens has the most faith and confidence in national government. The next largest percentage chooses local government, and the lowest percentage picks state government. The percentage choosing the national government has decreased since 1968, and the percentage picking local government has increased. The proportion of citizens indicating most faith and confidence in state government has remained virtually unchanged.

- In 1988, 37 percent of Illinois citizens said they have the most faith and confidence in the national government, compared to 29 percent who have most faith in their local government, and only 16 percent who say the same for the state government.

Although Illinois citizens distinguish among the levels of government as objects of faith and confidence, approximately equal percentages think they receive the most for their tax money from each government.

- 33 percent of Illinois citizens say they get the most for their tax money from their local government, 29 percent pick the national government, and 28 percent say the state government.

Conclusion

Even more than in 1987, Illinois citizens have shown they are concerned about education in their state. In 1988, a plurality again chooses education as the most important problem facing Illinois, and the percentages who say spending should be increased on both public schools and higher education have risen. There has been a substantial increase in the number of citizens who support an income tax increase earmarked for education. Most state residents appear willing to support their leaders in making changes in state funding to improve the quality of education.

Illinois citizens also appear to have a consensus on attitudes toward expressions of patriotism, the election of state judges, and state funding of transportation. In the latter two cases, public opinion could change if public debate intensifies and the issues are clarified. Public opinion in these areas should be followed and probed more deeply in the future.

Citizens disagree on most other issues covered by the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey*, often along demographic lines. A particularly interesting split occurs in the attitudes toward the three levels of government, with approximately a third of Illinois citizens saying they get the most for their tax money from each level of government--national, state, and local. At the same time, state government comes in behind national and local governments as the object of most governmental faith and confidence. In an era of New Federalism and increased reliance on state government funding and responsibility, attitudes toward levels of government are an important area of public opinion to explore.

Introduction

The status of public education in Illinois has been a major item on the state political agenda throughout the 1980s. In 1985, the state embarked upon a major program of school reform. The 1987 *Illinois Policy Survey* showed, however, that most Illinoisans had not seen any improvements in their local schools as a result of the reforms. Furthermore, the 1987 survey also showed that for the first time since the poll began in 1984, Illinois citizens perceived education as the most important problem facing the state.

Since that time education has continued as an important item of public debate. The Chicago school system was labelled the nation's worst by the Secretary of Education, numerous local school districts have encountered fiscal distress, and many state colleges and universities have had to increase tuition and lower enrollment ceilings.

Given the continued debate about the quality and the funding of education in the state, it was decided to pursue public attitudes on education in the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey*. Some of the attention to education issues emerged as response to standard questions about the most important problem facing the state and about spending preferences. In addition, specific questions were asked about support for taxes for education and evaluation of the state's schools.

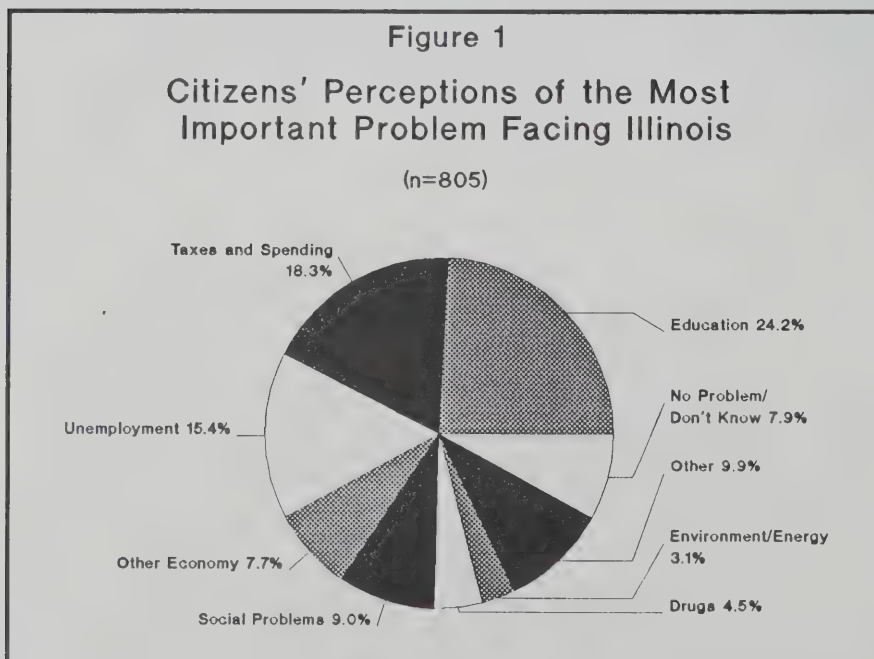
The 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* also covers several other topics that relate directly to policy issues facing the state or that describe public opinion in policy-relevant areas. It looks at the perception of personal financial situation in the state as a whole and among various demographic groups; spending preferences for eight state service areas; acceptability of possible tax increases; several current issues facing the state, such as mass transportation funding and methods of choosing state judges; and some political issues, including evaluation of state and national officials and comparative attitudes towards the national, state, and local levels of government.

Most Important Problem for Illinois

The *Illinois Policy Survey* traditionally asks survey respondents what they consider the most important problem facing the state of Illinois today. This question is open-ended to prevent any influence from suggested choices and is asked early in the survey before any of the questions can influence the thinking of respondents. The problems cited can therefore be taken as highly salient to the citizens of Illinois.

As Figure 1 shows, only 8 percent of the state's citizens cannot think of a major state problem, indicating that most Illinoisans are alert to current issues facing their state. There is also general agreement among state residents that four problem areas are particularly important. About two-thirds of the responses indicate education, taxes and spending, unemployment, or social problems as the area of primary concern. Social problems include specific references to crime, housing and the homeless; welfare, and the elderly.

- Education is seen as the state's number one problem; it was cited by 24 percent of the respondents.
- Taxes and spending are the major concern of 18 percent of the state's citizens.
- 15 percent are most concerned about unemployment.
- 9 percent cite social problems as the major state issue.
- Only 8 percent are unable to volunteer a major problem facing the state of Illinois.

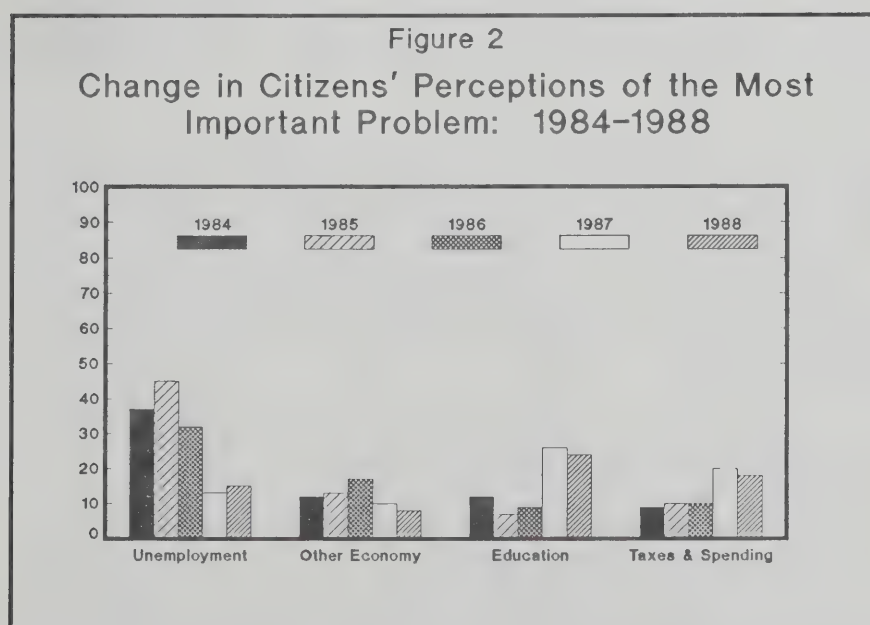


The salience of the education and tax and spending problems are underscored by a comparison with a survey taken in another state at approximately the same time. In Maryland, only 8 percent cited education as the number one problem facing their state, and only 2 percent indicated that it is taxes and spending. The major state problem in the eyes of Maryland's citizens is drugs, cited by 27 percent, followed by crime, indicated by 12 percent. These two problems were cited by only 4 percent and 3 percent, respectively, of Illinoisans.

Change in Problems Over Time

This is the second year in a row the citizens of Illinois have indicated that they consider education to be the state's number one problem. Prior to 1987, unemployment and other economic issues were seen as more important. As Figure 2 indicates, unemployment as the primary concern dropped from a high of 45 percent in 1985 to just 15 percent in 1988. At the same time, citation of education as the major problem more than tripled from 7 percent in 1985 to 26 percent in 1987 and 24 percent in 1988. Taxes and spending as the major state problem approximately doubled from 1984 to the 1987 and 1988 surveys.

- For the second year in a row, education is the most often cited problem facing the state. Between 1985 and 1987-1988, reference to education as the major state problem more than tripled.
- The importance of unemployment and other state economic problems has dropped dramatically in 1987 and 1988, compared to the previous three years.
- Taxes and spending as the major state issue approximately doubled in 1987 and 1988, compared to previous years.



The problems of education and taxes and spending assumed importance on the Illinois public agenda after the defeat of Governor James Thompson's proposed billion-dollar tax increase in March of 1987. Since that time, there has been extensive media coverage of cutbacks and perceived inadequacies in many state services. In particular, financial problems in local school districts, attempts (and failures) to pass school bond referenda, increased tuition at state colleges and universities, and budget-enforced cuts in enrollment in higher education have constantly reminded residents of the funding problems at all levels of education. Illinois citizens have clearly responded to this agenda with a concern about education in the state.

Demographic Differences in the Perception of Problems

There are some differences in the kinds of people who perceive each area as the most important state problem. Table 1 shows the percentages of several demographic groups that gave either education, taxes and spending, or unemployment as the number one state problem. These were the three most frequently cited state problem areas.

Although men and women are about equally concerned with unemployment in the state, women are more concerned about education, and men cite taxes and spending more often.

- **Women (29 percent) are more likely than men (19 percent) to be most concerned about education; men (22 percent) are more likely than women (15 percent) to be most concerned about taxes and spending.**

All age groups are approximately equally concerned about education in the state. There is a slight age difference in the perception of taxes and spending and of unemployment as a problem.

- **The youngest state citizens, aged 18 to 34, are the least likely to cite taxes and spending as the most important problem. The eldest citizens, aged 61 and above, are the least likely to see unemployment as the major problem.**

Race is an important factor in how state citizens perceive the major problem facing Illinois. Blacks are much more concerned than nonblacks about unemployment, and nonblacks are much more worried than blacks about education. Equal percentages of both blacks and nonblacks cite taxes and spending as the major state problem. Later in this report, it will be shown that, as a group, blacks evaluate their local schools less favorably than whites. Thus, the lower percentage of blacks most concerned about education reflects the intensity of the unemployment problem to black citizens, and not a lack of concern about education.

- **31 percent of blacks, compared to just 14 percent of nonblacks, think unemployment is the state's number one problem.**
- **26 percent of nonblacks, compared to 8 percent of blacks, are most concerned about education in the state.**

Education and income levels are both strongly related to how individuals perceive the state's problems. As both levels increase, there is greater concern with education, slightly less with taxes and spending, and less with unemployment.

Table 1
Top Three Problems in Illinois
by Demographic Groups

Demographic Group	Most Important Problem			N
	Education	Taxes & Spending	Unemployment	
All	24%	18%	15%	805
Gender				
Male	19	22	14	386
Female	29	15	17	419
Age				
18-34	23	14	17	301
35-60	26	20	17	336
61+	23	22	10	168
Race				
Black	8	18	31	86
Nonblack	26	18	14	719
Education				
High School or less	14	21	19	327
Some College	27	17	15	257
BA or more	37	14	11	221
Income				
Under \$21,000	14	16	19	218
\$21,000-\$42,000	24	19	17	309
\$42,000 +	34	17	12	216
Geographic Region				
Chicago	24	17	15	210
Balance of Cook	26	22	10	160
Collar Counties	25	17	14	140
Northern Illinois	34	17	14	71
Central Illinois	22	14	21	127
Southern Illinois	17	23	19	97
Political Party				
Republican	23	16	12	200
Democrat	26	19	14	276
Independent	27	19	16	239
Other/Don't Know	14	17	24	90

- 14 percent of citizens with a high school education or less are most concerned about education in the state, compared to 27 percent of those with some college, and 37 percent with a bachelor's degree or more.
- 14 percent of state residents earning \$14,000 or less are most concerned about education as a state problem, compared to 24 percent of those earning between \$21,000 and \$42,000, and 34 percent of those with incomes in excess of \$42,000.

For the most part, the region of Illinois in which a citizen lives does not affect perception of the state's major problem (see Appendix 2 for a regional map of Illinois). The exceptions to this uniformity of regional opinion are:

- Residents of the northern counties of Illinois (outside of Cook and the Collar counties) are the most concerned about education (34 percent), while those in the southern counties are the least likely to cite education as the number one problem (17 percent).
- Unemployment is cited as the major state problem most often in central Illinois (21 percent) and southern Illinois (19 percent). These are the areas where unemployment levels have remained the highest statewide.

Political party identification shows virtually no relationship to citizens' perceptions of the most important problem facing the state of Illinois.

Summary

For the second year in a row Illinois residents see education as the state's most important problem. In an open-ended format, 24 percent of the survey respondents volunteered education as their area of major concern for the state. This is in sharp contrast to the first three years of the *Illinois Policy Survey* when economic issues, especially unemployment, dominated the list of concerns.

Although different demographic groups tend to see the state's major problem similarly, there are a few significant differences that reflect the problems facing certain groups. Older citizens, for example, are more concerned about taxes and spending and less about unemployment than their younger counterparts. Blacks are more concerned about unemployment and less about education than nonblacks. This probably reflects the intensity of the unemployment situation for blacks more than a lack of concern about education. Groups with higher levels of education and income are more likely than groups with lower levels to cite education as the state's number one problem. Groups with lower levels of education and income are more concerned about unemployment. This probably indicates the different areas most immediately relevant to quality of life for these groups.

Overall, Illinois citizens have responded to changes in the public agenda in the past several years. As the economic situation has improved, they have turned their attention to the state's education problems.

Personal Financial Situation

As concern about state economic problems has declined, expectations about personal financial conditions have improved, again reflecting the improved economic situation in the state in the past two years. As Table 2 shows:

- About a third of Illinois residents think their personal financial condition will improve in the next year.
- Over half think their personal condition will stay the same in the next year, and only 11 percent think they will be worse off.

One way to assess the aggregate perceptions of personal financial position is to subtract the percentage that expects to be worse off one year from now from the percentage that anticipates being better off. That percentage difference has doubled between 1985-1986 and 1987-1988. As the bottom line shows in Table 2:

- In 1985 and 1986, the difference between the proportion of Illinoisans who anticipated being better off financially in one year and those who expected to be worse off was only 9 and 10 percentage points, respectively. In 1987 and 1988 that had doubled to 20 and 21 percent, respectively.

Table 2

Perception of Personal Financial Condition in One Year 1984-1988

	1984 (N = 800)	1985 (N = 800)	1986 (N = 700)	1987 (N = 700)	1988 (N = 805)
Better Off	28%	25%	27%	30%	32%
Same	57	57	54	56	53
Worse Off	12	16	17	10	11
Don't Know	3	2	2	4	4
Net Positive Minus Negative	+16	+9	+10	+20	+21

Demographic Differences in Personal Financial Situation

The perception of improvement in financial condition is not, however, equally shared among all groups of Illinois citizens. Table 3 shows that men are more optimistic than women and that there is a major age difference in the perception of future financial situation. In fact, the only group that is more pessimistic than optimistic is those aged 61 and above.

- 36 percent of Illinois men think they will be better off financially in one year, compared to 27 percent of Illinois women.
- Only 9 percent of Illinois residents above the age of 60 think they will be better off financially in one year, compared to 33 percent of those aged 35 to 60, and 43 percent of those under the age of 35.

Race has some effect on one's perception of future financial status. Blacks are more likely than nonblacks to anticipate being better off in the next year, but as a group they are also more likely to think they will be worse off. The majority of nonblacks anticipates no change in financial status in the coming year.

- More than twice as many blacks (22 percent) as nonblacks (10 percent) think they will be worse off financially in one year.

Not surprisingly, higher levels of both education and income are associated with anticipated improvement in one's financial condition. Also, as a group, residents in Chicago and the Collar Counties of DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will are more optimistic than residents in other sections of the state. Republicans are much more likely than individuals who identify themselves as Democrats or independents to anticipate an improvement in their financial condition in the next year.

- 36 percent of residents who hold a bachelor's degree or more think they will be better off financially in the next year, compared to 31 percent who have only some college and 29 percent with a high school education or less.
- 37 percent of the highest income group (\$42,000 and above) anticipate improvement in personal finances, compared to about 30 percent of those with a lower income.
- 36 percent of Chicagoans and 35 percent of the residents of the Collar Counties foresee an improved financial situation for themselves in the next year, compared to just 23 percent in the northern Illinois Counties. The percentages in the rest of the state are: 31 percent in Cook County outside of Chicago, 29 percent in central Illinois, and 27 percent in the southern counties.
- 40 percent of Republican identifiers expect to be better off next year, compared to 26 percent of Democrats and 33 percent of independents.

Table 3
Perception of Personal Financial
Condition in One Year by Demographic Groups

Demographic Group	Better Off	About Same	Worse Off	Net Positive Minus Negative	N
All	32%	53%	11%	+ 21%	805
Gender					
Male	36	50	10	+ 26	386
Female	27	56	12	+ 15	419
Age					
18-34	43	48	6	+ 37	301
35-60	33	51	13	+ 20	336
61+	9	68	18	- 9	168
Race					
Black	36	41	22	+ 14	86
Nonblack	31	55	10	+ 21	719
Education					
High School or Less	29	54	12	+ 17	327
Some College	31	53	12	+ 19	257
BA or More	36	53	9	+ 27	221
Income					
Under \$21,000	29	52	12	+ 17	218
\$21,000-\$42,000	30	58	10	+ 20	309
\$42,000 +	37	52	10	+ 27	216
Geographic Region					
Chicago	36	50	10	+ 26	210
Balance of Cook	31	50	15	+ 16	160
Collar Counties	35	54	7	+ 28	140
Northern Illinois	23	61	11	+ 12	71
Central Illinois	29	58	11	+ 18	127
Southern Illinois	27	54	15	+ 12	97
Political Party					
Republican	40	50	6	+ 34	200
Democrat	26	57	13	+ 13	276
Independent	33	52	13	+ 20	239
Other/Don't Know	26	51	14	+ 12	90

Summary

As a group, Illinoisans were more optimistic about their short-term financial future in 1988 than in 1985 or 1986. Most state residents think they will be at least as well off financially in one year as they are today. Blacks, those over the age of 60, Downstaters, and individuals with lower levels of education and income are, however, less optimistic than others.

Perceived financial condition is only one aspect of the quality of life. Future survey research at the state level in Illinois could usefully probe for the components of a high quality of life for different groups and the relative importance of perceived financial situation.

State Spending Priorities

Most state citizens probably do not have a good picture of the funding levels for state services and programs. Nonetheless, they can have spending priorities for broad functional categories of state government. Since its beginning in 1984, the *Illinois Policy Survey* has sought to measure citizen spending priorities by asking survey respondents whether spending should be increased, kept the same, decreased, or ended altogether in each of eight service areas.¹ The areas are: public schools (elementary and high school), state colleges and universities, environmental protection, low income families with children, industrial development and attraction of new industry, state prisons and correctional facilities, highways and roads, and job training programs for the unemployed.²

Table 4 shows that citizens rarely want to see spending levels decreased in these basic state services. Priorities are therefore determined by the percentage of individuals who want to see spending increased in each area, rather than merely maintained at current levels.

As Figure 3 shows, there is strong support among Illinois citizens for increased state spending in these basic service areas. Less than 2 percent want no spending increases at all, and only 13 percent support only one or two increases.

- 85 percent of Illinois citizens would like to see spending increased in three or more state service areas.
- A majority of Illinois citizens (67 percent) wants to see spending increased in four or more of the service areas about which they were asked.

Table 4

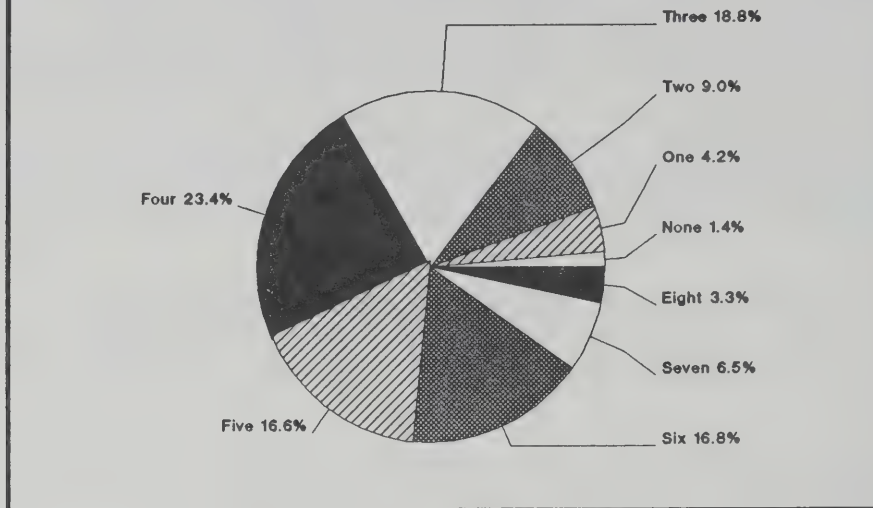
Spending Preferences for Eight State Service Areas

Service Area	Increase	Same	Decrease/End	Don't Know
Public Schools	77%	19%	4%	1%
Higher Education	62	31	3	4
Job Training	61	30	6	2
Low Income Families	51	36	9	4
Environment	50	39	6	4
Economic Development	48	37	12	3
Prisons	41	41	13	5
Roads	37	53	8	2

¹This question was not asked in the 1987 poll.

²Spending preferences for job training were not asked in the first survey in 1984.

Figure 3
Number of Service Areas
Spending Increase Wanted



- 43 percent would approve spending increases in five or more areas.

Figure 4 shows the percentages favoring a spending increase in each of the eight areas about which survey respondents were asked. Overwhelmingly, aspects of education dominate spending preferences for Illinois citizens.

- 77 percent of the state's citizens think spending should be increased for public schools (kindergarten through high school).
- 62 percent want to see spending increased for state-supported higher education.
- A strong majority--61 percent--also wants spending increased in another area of education, that of job training for the unemployed.
- A majority (51 percent) supports increased state spending for low income families with children.
- 50 percent also endorse increased state spending for environmental protection.
- The remaining three service areas each receive less than majority support for a spending increase. These are economic development--48 percent; prisons--41 percent; and state highways and roads--37 percent.

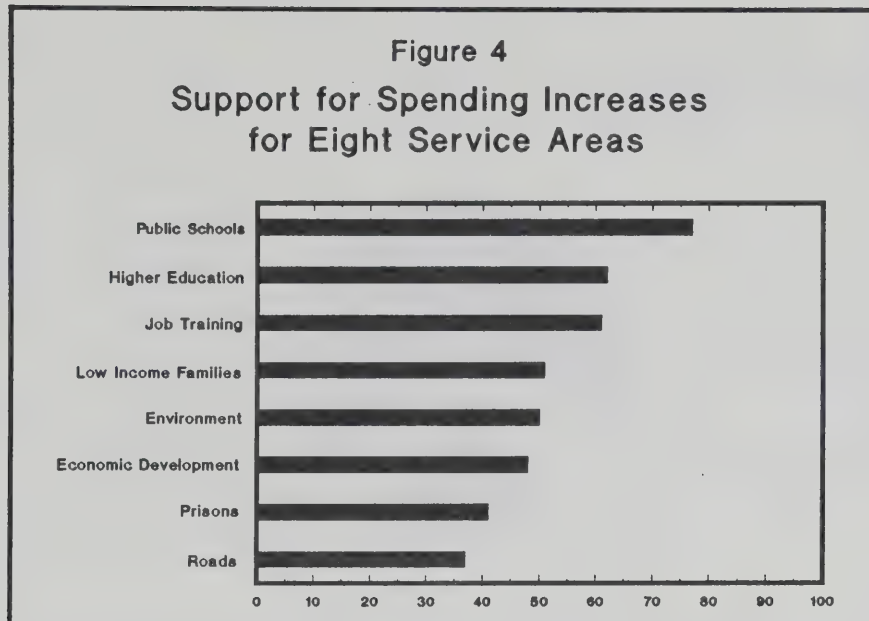


Figure 5 shows that the first priority for a spending increase, by far, is public education. When added to those whose first choice for an increase is either higher education or job training, education in one form or another is the highest priority for a state spending increase for a majority of citizens.

- 41 percent of state citizens choose public schools as the first priority for a spending increase.
- All other areas have less than 15 percent choosing them as the first priority for a spending increase.

Although a large majority of all state citizens indicates a desire for increased state spending on education, those who said education is the number one state problem are even more supportive of increased spending. As Table 5 shows:

- 90 percent of citizens who think education is the number one state problem support increased spending on public education, compared to 73 percent of those who think the state's most important problem is something other than education.
- 69 percent of Illinoisans who say education is the major state problem want to see spending increased for higher education, compared to 60 percent who say the state's most important problem is something other than education.

Figure 5

First Priority for Spending Increase

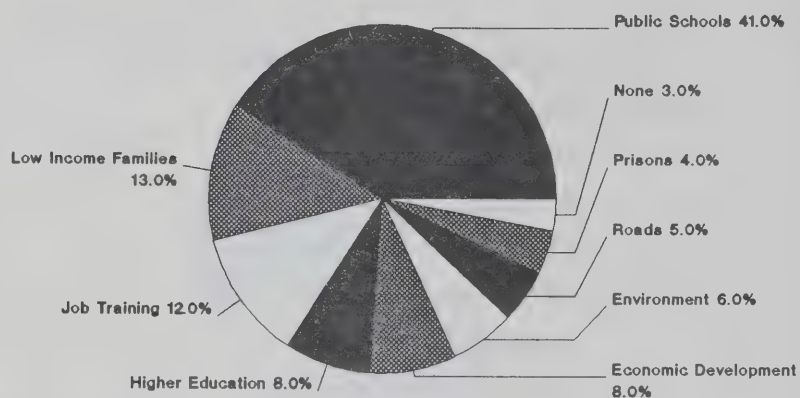


Table 5

**Spending Preferences for Education
by Perception of Number One State Problem**

Area of Education	Number One State Problem		
	Education (N = 195)	Other (N = 610)	Total (N = 805)
Public Education			
Increase	90%	73%	77%
Same	9	23	19
Decrease/End	2	3	3
Don't Know	0	1	1
Higher Education			
Increase	69	60	62
Same	24	33	30
Decrease/End	2	4	3
Don't Know	5	4	4

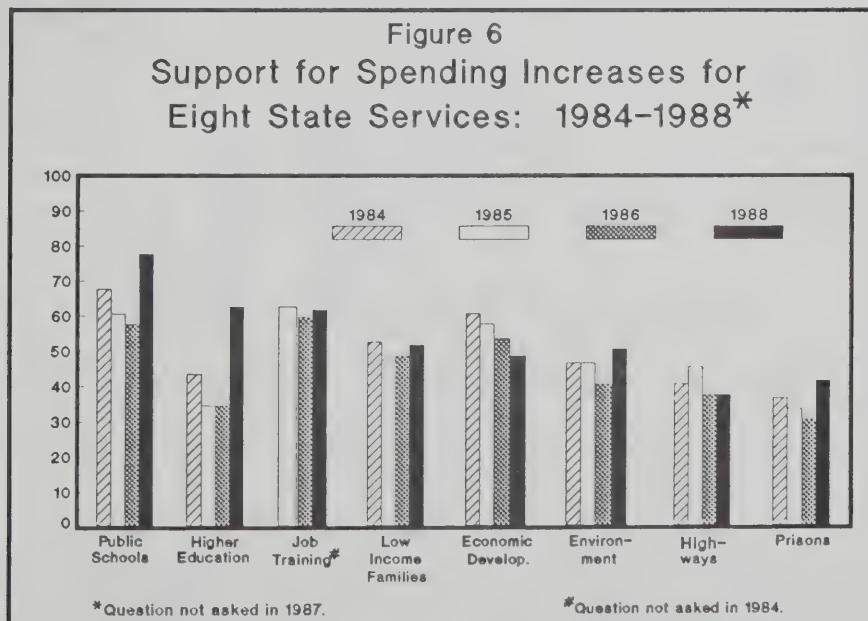
Spending Preferences Over Time

Since the first *Illinois Policy Survey* in 1984, there have been some changes in support for spending increases for state service areas. Figure 6 shows the percentages favoring a spending increase for each year since 1984, except for 1987. The question asked that year was slightly different and therefore cannot be used for comparisons.

Public support for increased state spending on higher education has increased the most dramatically since 1984. In the same time period, support for more spending on public elementary and high schools has grown from already high levels. Illinois citizens are apparently registering their concerns about public education in the state. Public colleges and universities have been raising tuition, decreasing enrollment ceilings, and reportedly losing faculty to other states. At the elementary and high school levels, the Chicago public schools have received highly critical evaluations, school districts are increasingly relying on local property taxes, school bond referenda have been defeated in reaction to the higher property taxes, and many schools have suffered cutbacks in personnel and programs. State officials have received criticism from professionals for a perceived lack of financial support of public education. The citizens of Illinois appear to agree that education is in need of state action.

- Citizen support for increased state spending on higher education almost doubled from 1986 to 1988, going from 34 percent to 62 percent.
- Support for increased spending on public elementary and high schools went from 57 percent in 1986 to 77 percent in 1988.

At the same time, support for more state spending has decreased for economic development and highways, showing that concern for basic economic issues has declined as the state's economy has improved in the past couple of years.



- 60 percent of Illinoisans wanted to see increased state spending on economic development in 1984, but that percentage dropped below the majority mark, to 48 percent, in 1988.
- Support for more spending on highways was as high as 45 percent in 1985, but dropped to 37 percent in both 1986 and 1988.

Although support for more state spending for environmental protection and prisons dropped in 1986 compared to previous years, the 1988 poll shows that Illinois citizens are responding to widespread concerns about the state's environmental problems and prison conditions by supporting more spending in these two areas.

- Although 46 percent favored increased spending on environmental protection in 1984 and 1985, that percentage dropped to 40 percent in 1986 and then climbed to 50 percent in 1988.
- Increased spending for prisons has never attained majority support. Nonetheless, the percentage of Illinoisans who favor more spending on prisons rose from 30 percent in 1986 to 41 percent in 1988.

In two state service areas, job training and help for low income families with children, support for higher spending levels has remained fairly steady over the five-year period.

- Support for more spending for job training has hovered at the 60 percent mark from 1985 to 1988.
- Support for increased spending on low income families with children has been consistently around 50 percent during the past five years.

Summary

Illinoisans have clearly shown their priorities for state spending. The top three areas are all related to education--public schools, state colleges and universities, and job training programs. Contrary to popular notions that opposition to welfare is growing, a majority of the state's residents want to see more state spending for low income families with children. Increased spending for environmental protection receives support from half of the state's citizens. Economic development, prisons, and highways trail these areas, with less than half the population supporting spending increases. However, support for additional funding for prisons has increased over time.

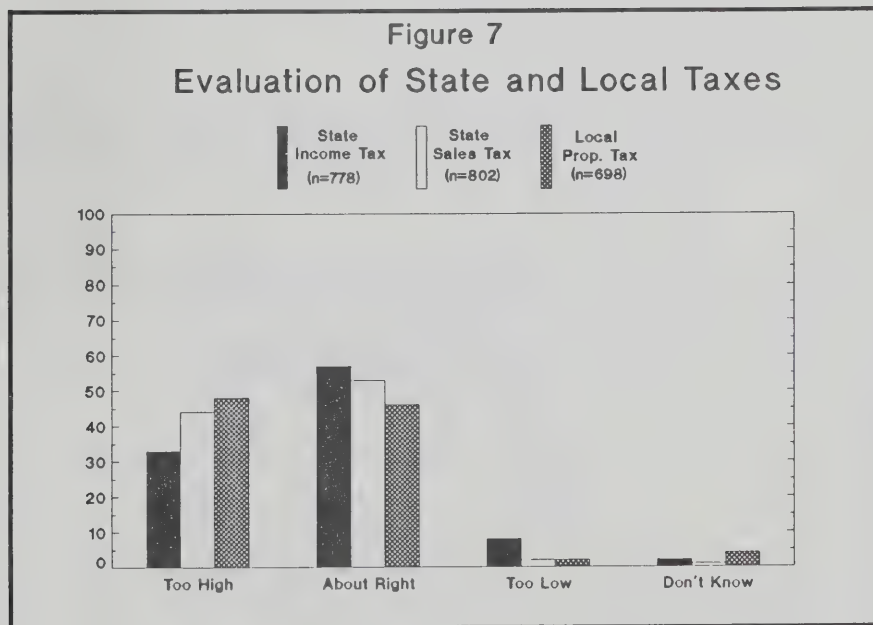
Tax Issues

Evaluation of State and Local Taxes

No one likes to pay taxes, but most citizens accept their necessity. Disagreement arises, however, over the level of taxation and the relative merits of different kinds of taxes. Respondents to the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* were asked whether they thought three state and local taxes were too high, about right, or too low. The taxes are the state income tax, the state sales tax, and local property taxes.¹

As Figure 7 shows, few state residents think any of these taxes is too low. The main variation in opinion is between those who think each tax is too high and those who think it is about right. Citizens clearly perceive the state income tax as the least burdensome and the local property tax as the most burdensome.

- Only 33 percent of Illinois citizens perceive the state income tax as too high, compared to 44 percent who think the sales tax is too high and 48 percent who find the local property tax too high.
- A majority of state citizens thinks the state income and sales taxes are about right.



¹Respondents who indicated that they did not pay a particular tax are eliminated from the analysis. The number of respondents for each tax is therefore different and less than the total sample size of 805. The number of individuals responding to each tax question is indicated in Figure 7.

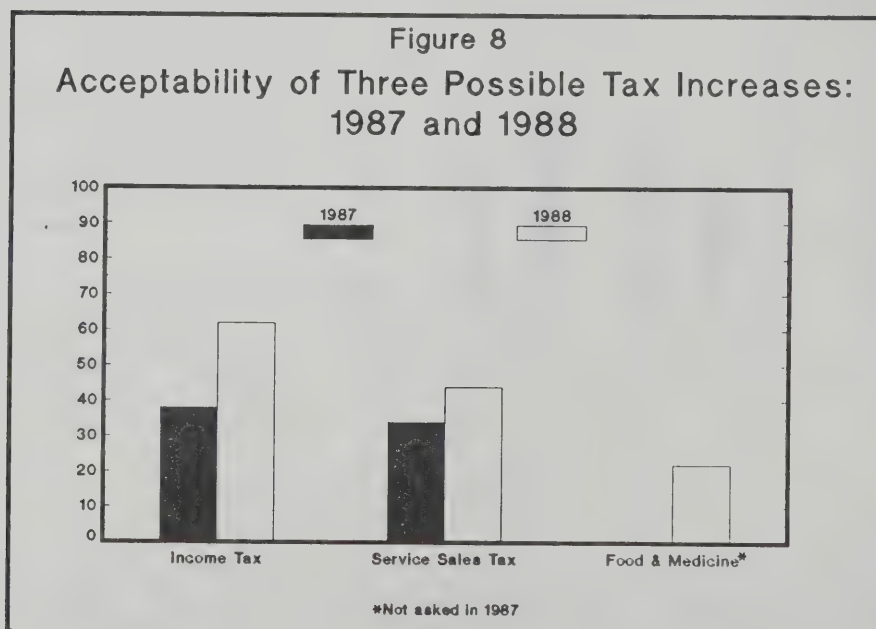
Acceptability of Possible Tax Increases

In his budget proposal of March 1987, Governor Thompson proposed major tax increases intended to raise state revenues by approximately one billion dollars a year. Legislative reaction was negative, however, and there were no major tax increases for fiscal years 1988 or 1989. Since that time, many state programs have been cut back or have failed to keep pace with inflation. Many state agencies and their clients have indicated a need for increased state funding for many of the state's basic services. The previous section has shown that the citizens of Illinois also want to see increased spending in several broad functional areas of state responsibility. If natural revenue growth is unable to keep pace with these demands, new or increased taxes are the only route to increased state spending.

There are three principal ways the state of Illinois could raise taxes in amounts large enough to make major differences in state programs. These are an increase in the state income tax (both personal and corporate); a new state sales tax on services, such as home repair, haircuts, dry cleaning, etc.; and imposition of the full 5 percent state sales tax on food and medicine.

When asked about the acceptability of each of these choices if a state tax increase proves to be necessary, Illinois citizens were very selective in their evaluations. As Figure 8 shows:

- An increase in the state income tax is by far the most acceptable way to raise state revenues.
- 62 percent of state citizens find an income tax increase acceptable, compared to only 44 percent acceptability for a sales tax on services.



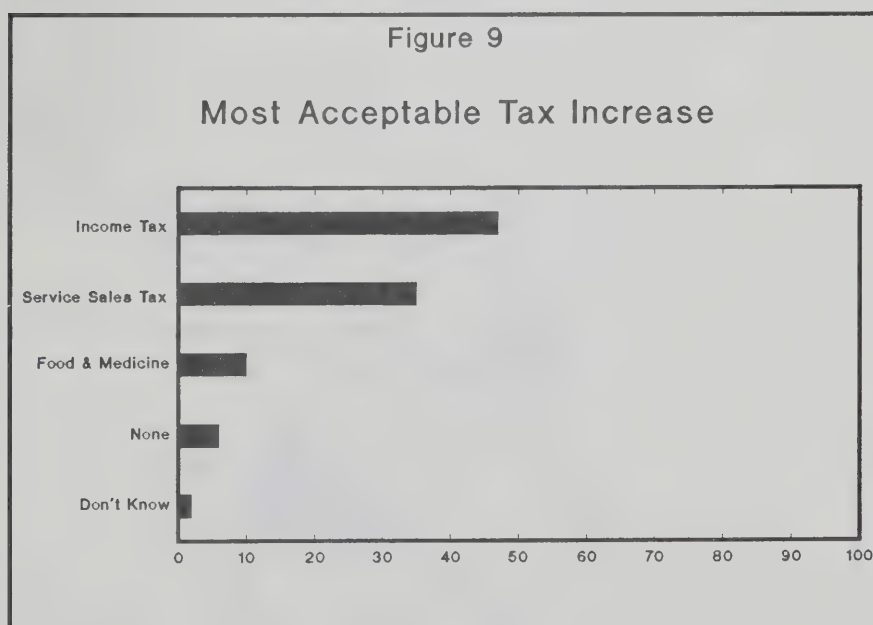
- Only 22 percent find a sales tax on food and medicine to be acceptable.

Two years of state budget woes have apparently had an effect on the acceptability of a tax increase. Figure 8 also shows the acceptability of an income tax increase or a service sales tax in 1987, as recorded by the 1987 *Illinois Policy Survey*. Both tax possibilities have gained in acceptance between 1987 and 1988, but the increase in acceptance has been especially strong for the income tax. Its support went from a little over a third to a very strong majority.

- Acceptability of an increase in the state income tax climbed from 38 percent in 1987 to 62 percent in 1988.

When asked which of the three tax possibilities would be the most acceptable tax increase, almost half the state's residents prefer the income tax increase. This is considerably stronger than the acceptance level for the other two taxes (see Figure 9).

- 47 percent of Illinois citizens prefer an income tax increase over two other possibilities.
- Only 35 percent give first priority to a service sales tax, and just 10 percent indicate a sales tax on food and medicine as the first choice.
- Only 6 percent volunteered that no tax increase would be acceptable.

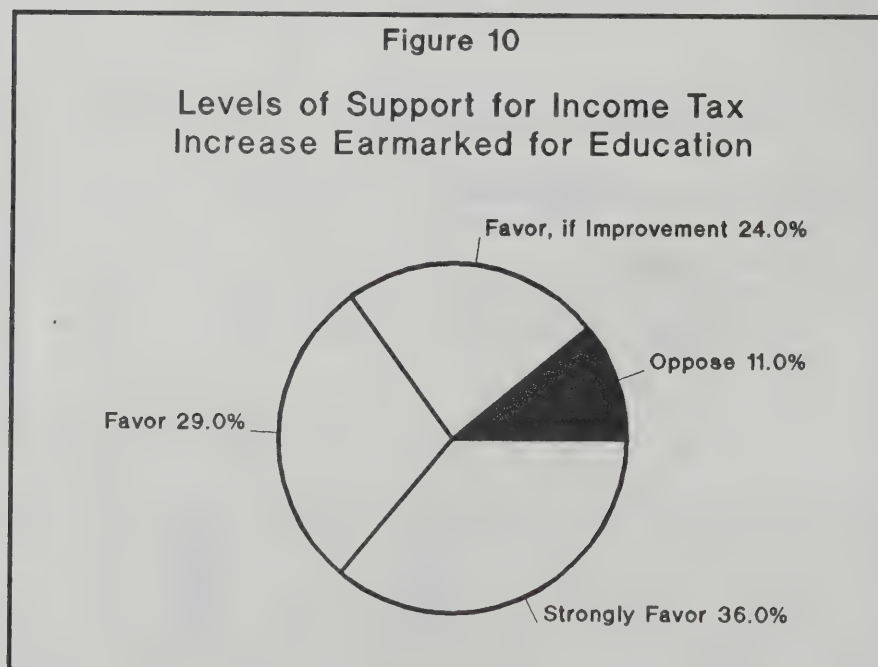


Taxes for Education

Previous sections of this report have shown that a plurality of Illinoisans think education is the most important problem facing the state, that over three-fourths support spending increases for public education, and 62 percent think spending should also be increased for state higher education. In the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey*, citizens show they are willing to back up their concern about education by supporting an earmarked income tax increase.

Overall, a remarkably high 89 percent of the state's citizens could support an income tax increase for education. A strong majority of 65 percent support an unqualified increase earmarked for education, and another 24 percent would support it if they were convinced increased spending would improve the quality of state education. Of the 65 percent who unconditionally favor the earmarked tax increase, 36 percent say they strongly favor it. As summed up in Figure 10:

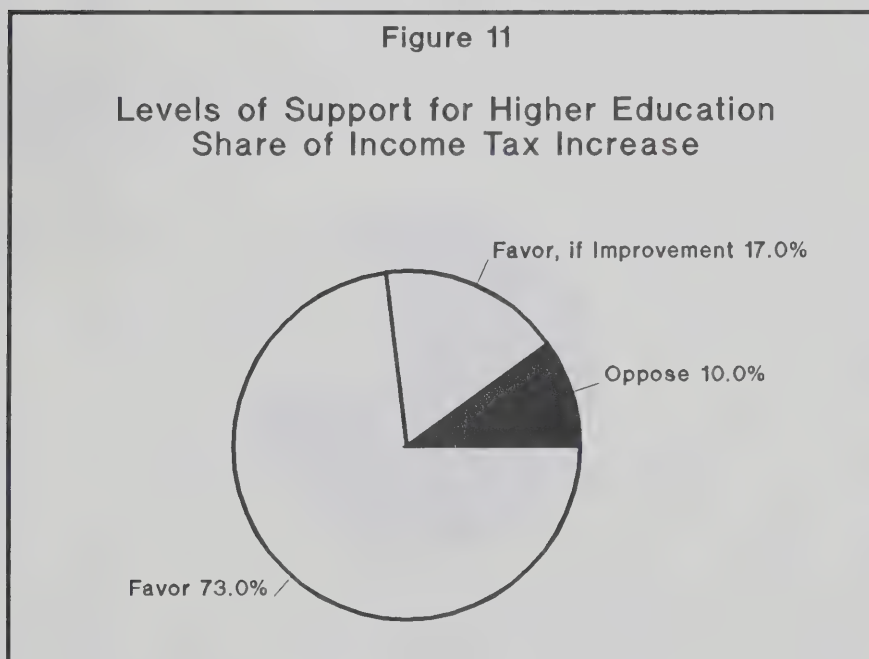
- 36 percent of Illinois citizens *strongly* favor an income tax increase earmarked for education.
- Another 29 percent favor the earmarked increase.
- 24 percent more would favor an earmarked tax increase if they thought it would improve the quality of education.
- Altogether, 89 percent of the state's citizens could support an income tax increase for education.



Because public opinion polls often overestimate support for spending increases by not pointing out the personal tax consequences, the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* asked the 65 percent who gave unconditional support for the increase if they would *personally* be willing to pay a higher state income tax for education. Eighty-seven percent of these individuals indicated they would be willing to pay the tax increase, and another 4 percent gave conditional acceptance.

To clarify exactly how Illinoisans want their education tax dollars spent, respondents to the survey were also asked if an education tax increase should be used exclusively for elementary and secondary education or if some part of it should go to higher education. Figure 11 shows that most Illinoisans want an income tax increase to be used for both levels of education.

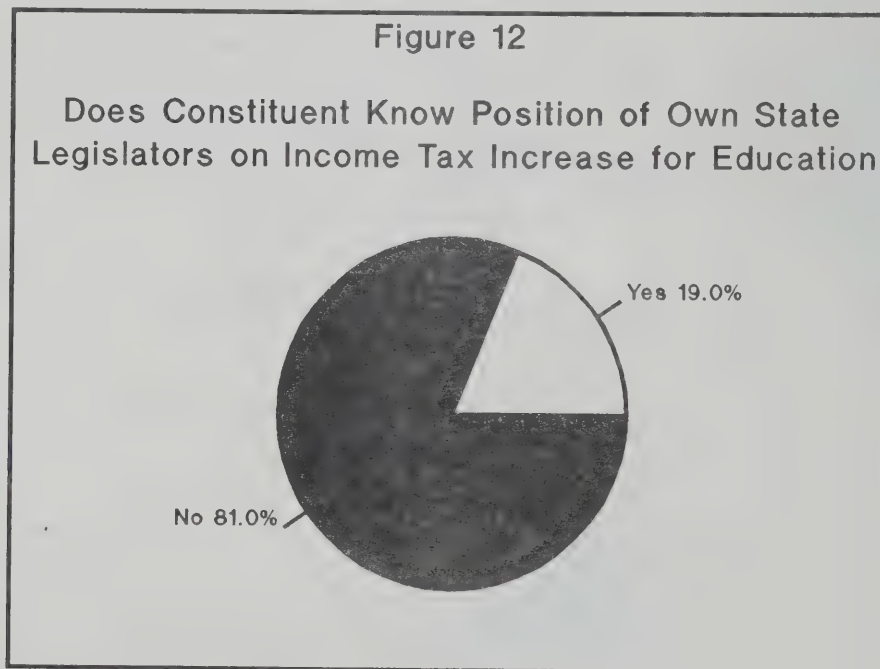
- 73 percent of state residents unconditionally favor using an education income tax increase for institutions of higher education, as well as for elementary and secondary education.
- Another 17 percent would favor using the earmarked tax for state colleges and universities if they thought the increased funding would improve teaching and research.
- Altogether, 90 percent of the state's citizens would support using part of an earmarked income tax increase to fund higher education.



Summary

Illinois citizens clearly perceive the state income tax as their least burdensome major tax. Only a third see it as currently too high, and it is the most acceptable if there has to be a tax increase. In apparent response to reports of funding problems for education and other state services, acceptability of a state income tax increase has risen considerably since 1987. If an income tax increase were to be earmarked for education, it could be supported by an overwhelming 89 percent of the state's citizens. Sixty-five percent give unqualified support and an additional 24 percent would support it if it meant an improvement in the quality of education. Thirty-six percent say they *strongly* favor an income tax increase for education, and most of the unqualified supporters are personally willing to pay a higher income tax for education. Most state residents want a tax for education to be used for both public schools and public colleges and universities.

The support for the education increase is mostly passive support. That is, it should not be expected that many citizens will actively work to bring about an education tax increase. As Figure 12 shows, most citizens do not know how even one of their state legislators stands on the question of an income tax increase for education. Although they will not work for its passage, according to the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* most citizens would accept a tax increase for education and even welcome it.



Evaluation of State Educational Institutions

Respondents to the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* were asked to evaluate the quality of three areas of education in the state--their own community public schools, all state public schools, and state colleges and universities. As Figure 13 indicates, residents are most likely to rate their own local schools as excellent, but institutions of higher education receive the highest proportion of excellent plus good evaluations.

- 69 percent of Illinois residents evaluate the state's public colleges and universities as excellent or good.
- 58 percent think their own community public schools (kindergarten through high school) are excellent or good.
- Only 35 percent rank state public schools in general in the excellent or good category.
- Almost one in five Illinoisans thinks the local public school or state public schools in general offer poor or very poor quality education.

Demographic Differences in School Evaluations

Table 6 shows demographic differences in the percentages who rank the three educational institutions as excellent or good on the one hand, and as poor or very poor on the other. These differences tend to be small in the evaluation of state schools in general, except that blacks and the residents of Cook County (both Chicago and the balance of Cook) have the most negative view.

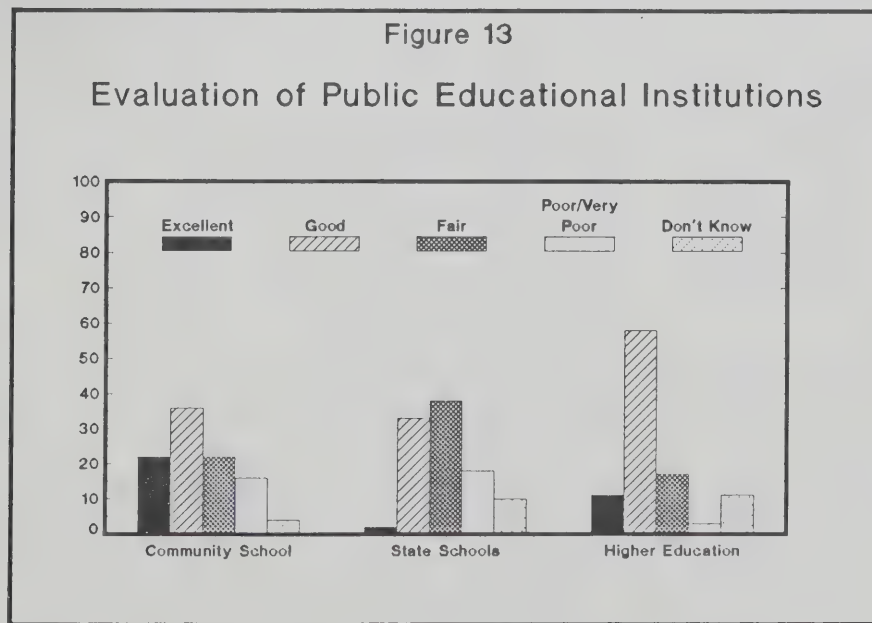


Table 6
Evaluation of State Educational Institutions

Demographic Group	<u>Local School</u>		<u>State Schools</u>		<u>Higher Education</u>		N
	1 - 2*	3 - 4*	1 - 2*	3 - 4*	1 - 2*	3 - 4*	
All	58%	16%	35%	18%	69%	3%	805
Gender							
Male	56	18	33	16	69	4	386
Female	60	14	36	20	68	2	419
Age							
18-34	50	20	35	17	71	3	301
35-60	59	17	32	20	69	2	336
61+	70	7	38	15	63	4	168
Race							
Black	30	24	27	26	54	2	86
Nonblack	62	15	36	17	70	3	719
Education							
High Schl or Less	54	17	37	21	60	4	327
Some College	64	10	34	16	70	3	257
BA or More	57	22	31	15	78	2	221
Income							
Under \$21,000	50	14	35	16	58	5	218
\$21,000-\$42,000	59	18	38	18	72	3	309
\$42,000+	65	15	32	16	78	1	216
Geographic Region							
Chicago	24	45	30	28	67	4	210
Balance of Cook	77	3	27	20	71	3	160
Collar Countuies	68	3	38	14	68	1	140
Northern Illinois	67	10	36	13	73	2	71
Central Illinois	69	10	41	15	73	5	127
Southern Illinois	66	6	42	7	59	3	97
Children at Home							
Yes	58	17	33	20	68	2	325
No	58	15	36	17	69	4	480

* 1 - 2 = Excellent to Good
3 - 4 = Poor to Very Poor

In the case of public higher education, blacks, older citizens, lower income individuals, and southern Illinoisans all give somewhat lower evaluations than their counterparts. Even so, a strong majority of each of these groups rates public colleges and universities as excellent or good.

- A majority of every demographic group evaluates state colleges and universities as excellent or good.

The biggest differences show up in the evaluation of each individual's own community school. In particular, blacks and Chicagoans rate their local schools lower than nonblacks and residents of the rest of the state.

- Although 62 percent of nonblacks rate their local public schools as good or excellent, only 30 percent of blacks give this high rating.
- 45 percent of Chicagoans think their local schools are poor or very poor. The next highest percentage of residents with this low evaluation is only 10 percent in northern and central Illinois.
- Only 24 percent of Chicagoans think their own community schools are excellent or good, compared to about 70 percent of the residents in the rest of the state.

The last part of Table 6 shows that whether or not an individual has children at home does not affect perceptions of the performance of any of the state educational institutions.

Summary

Illinois residents tend to perceive their own local public schools as performing at a higher level than the state's schools in general. A majority thinks their own schools do an excellent or good job, but only about a third feel the same way about schools in the rest of the state. Blacks are as negative about their own local schools as they are about Illinois public schools in general. Chicagoans are actually more negative about their local schools than about state schools in general. The state's institutions of higher education receive the highest proportion of excellent and good evaluations.

Current Issues

One of the purposes of the *Illinois Policy Survey* is to assess public opinion on issues that are currently the subject of public debate or that legislative and other leaders have identified as potentially important items on the public agenda. The 1988 survey queried respondents about a diverse range of topics in this category. Among them are water priorities during times of drought, the funding of transportation systems, potential state regulation of insurance policies, and two issues pertaining to the structure of state government--the possibility of limiting the governor to two terms and the method of selection of state judges.

Also, because the possible legalization and control of street drugs has been emerging as a potentially major item on the national agenda, the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* asked two questions on this topic to provide a baseline for changes in public opinion as the national debate develops. Finally, because of the controversy surrounding attitudes towards the Pledge of Allegiance during the presidential campaign, and since the 1988 state poll was taken immediately after the election, it was decided to investigate Illinoisans' attitudes toward the pledge.

State Issues

Water Priorities during Drought

In the face of last summer's severe drought, some communities had to make choices about how citizens could use water. The 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* shows that, given a choice between filling a community swimming pool and allowing homeowners to water their lawns, 36 percent of Illinoisans think preference should be given to lawns and 45 percent to the pool. Thirteen percent feel neither use should be a priority, and 7 percent could not answer (see Figure 14). The actual question was: "In the drought we had this summer, some communities were low on water and had to limit its use. If a city had to choose between allowing homeowners to water their lawns and filling a community swimming pool, which do you think should be done?"

The absence of a majority opinion helps explain why some communities had difficulty making and enforcing water use regulations during the height of the drought. The fact that over a third of Illinois citizens think lawns are more important than community use of water may indicate a need to inform them about the recuperative abilities of grass versus the need to provide a cooling off facility during a heat wave.

Transportation Funding

By a large margin, Illinois residents think funding for the two major areas of state transportation spending should be kept separate. The question put to respondents was: "Some people say that any tax money the state spends on mass transportation in the Chicago area should be matched with state money for highways in the rest of the state. Others say the two programs should be kept separate. Which do you think--keep mass transportation and highways separate--or fund them together?" Figure 15 shows that:

- 65 percent of Illinoisans think funding for Chicago mass transportation and downstate highways should be done separately.

Figure 14
Water Priority During Drought

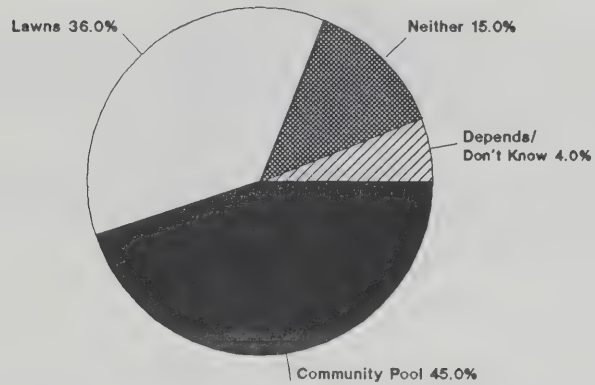
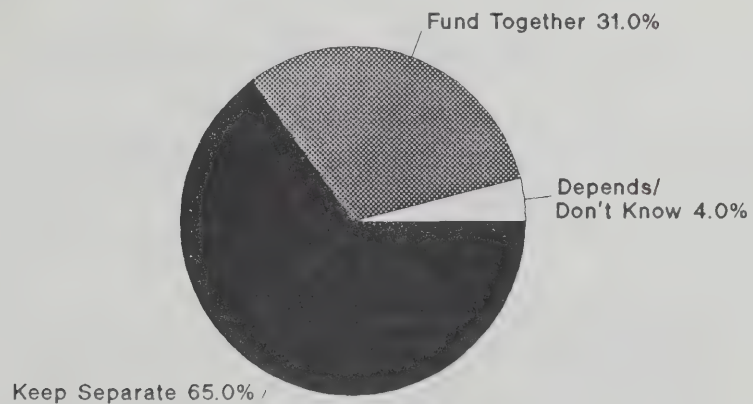


Figure 15
Funding of Mass Transportation and Highways



At the present time, highway construction and transit assistance for Chicago area buses and trains are tied together because of Chicago-downstate politics. The views on this question of citizens from different regions, however, are not very different from one another. Table 7 shows that:

- 69 percent of Chicagoans think that the two areas of funding should be kept separate, compared to about 64 percent of downstate respondents.

Even the area with the lowest support for separate funding--the Collar Counties of DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will--still provides a strong majority support of 57 percent. Republicans and Democrats both support separate funding at similar levels.

- 69 percent of Republicans and 65 percent of Democrats each say that funding of Chicago mass transportation and downstate highways should not be tied to one another.

Regulation of Insurance Policy Language

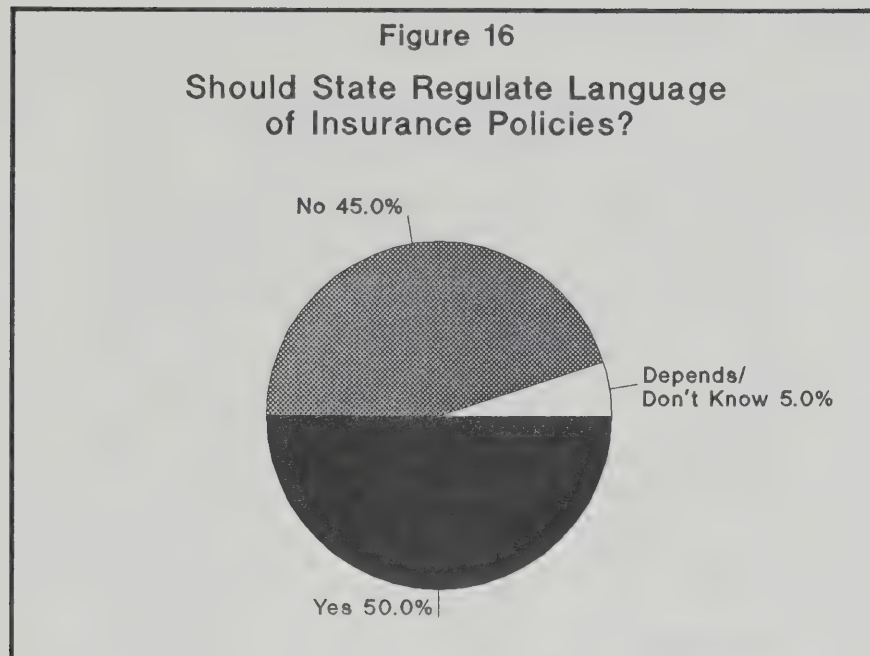
Illinoisans are much more closely divided on the issue of state regulation of the language in insurance policies. The exact wording of the question is: "People sometimes have difficulty understanding insurance policies--what they will cost and what the benefits are. Should the state government regulate the language of insurance policies, or is this something the companies should control themselves?" Figure 16 shows that:

- Exactly half the survey respondents say the sometimes confusing language of insurance policies should be regulated by the state, 45 percent say it should be left to the insurance companies, and 5 percent are uncertain.

Table 7

Opinion on Funding of Mass Transportation and Highways

	Separate	Together	Depends/ Don't Know	N
All	69%	31%	4%	805
Region				
Chicago	69	30	1	210
Balance Cook	70	27	3	160
Collar Counties	57	38	5	140
Northern Illinois	62	36	2	71
Central Illinois	64	32	4	127
Southern Illinois	64	27	9	97
Political Party				
Republican	69	29	3	200
Democrat	65	32	3	276



On this issue there are some regional differences in opinion. Table 8 shows that:

- Over half the residents of Chicago (59 percent), the balance of Cook County (51 percent), and southern Illinois (56 percent) think the state should regulate the language of insurance policies.
- Less than half agree in the Collar Counties (46 percent), northern Illinois (43 percent), or the counties of central Illinois (38 percent).

Partisan differences on this issue are fairly strong.

- Only 37 percent of Republicans favor state regulation of insurance policy language, compared to 54 percent of both Democrats and Independents.

Limitation of Gubernatorial Terms

The 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* shows that a strong majority of citizens favor limiting the governor to two terms in office. Figure 17 shows the following response.

- 62 percent of Illinoisans would limit the governor of the state to two terms in office.
- This is up from 48 percent in 1985 and 58 percent in 1987.

Although the majority from all sections of the state favor the two-term limitation, Chicagoans are somewhat less supportive, with 54 percent favoring the limitation, compared to 64 percent of the respondents from downstate (see Table 9).

Table 8

**State or Company Regulation of the
Language of Insurance Policies**

	State	Companies	Depends/ Don't Know	N
All	50%	45%	5%	805
Region				
Chicago	59	37	4	210
Balance Cook	51	45	4	160
Collar Counties	46	46	8	140
Northern Illinois	43	51	6	71
Central Illinois	38	60	1	127
Southern Illinois	56	38	7	97
Political Party				
Republican	37	57	6	200
Democrat	54	42	5	276
Independent	54	42	4	239
Other, Won't Say	56	41	3	90

Figure 17

Limit Governor to Two Terms

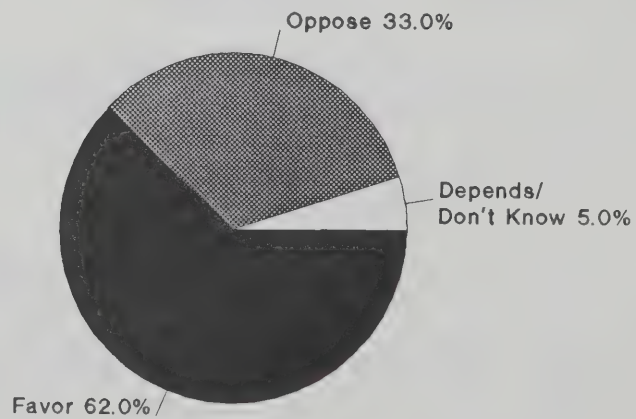


Table 9
Limiting Governor to Two Terms

	Favor	Oppose	Depends/ Don't Know	N
All	62%	33%	6%	805
Region				
Chicago	54	39	7	210
Balance Cook	60	37	3	160
Collar Counties	62	33	5	140
Northern Illinois	65	26	9	71
Central Illinois	69	28	3	127
Southern Illinois	70	23	7	97
Political Party				
Republican	62	34	4	200
Democrat	64	30	6	276
Independent	54	41	4	239
Other, Won't Say	73	16	11	90

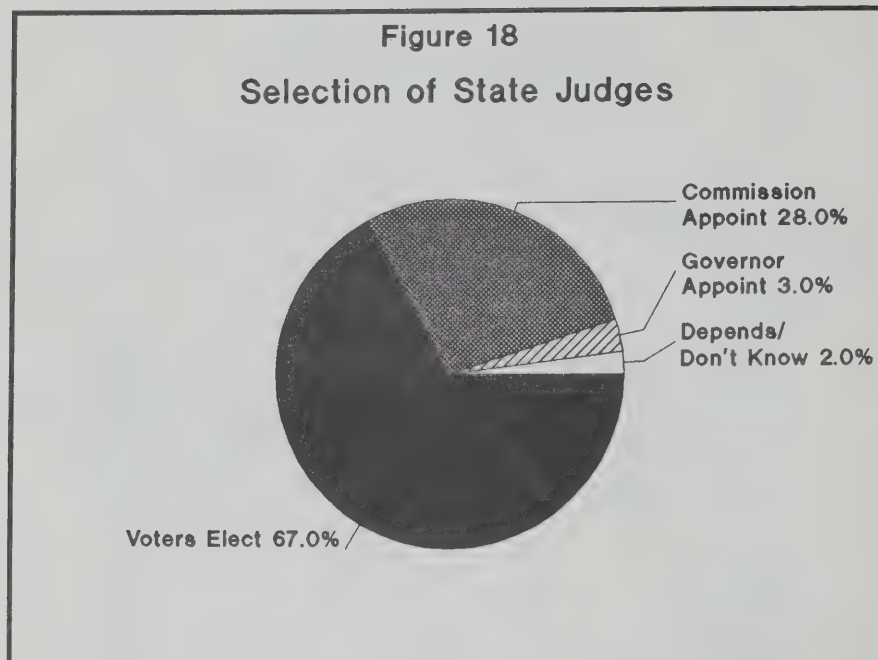
Partisan differences are not what might be expected.

- Republicans and Democrats both support a limitation on the governor's terms in office about equally, with 62 percent of the Republicans and 64 percent of the Democrats in favor.
- Self-described independents are the least supportive, with 54 percent.

Selection of State Judges

The 1988 poll also reveals that despite numerous incidents of judicial malfeasance in the past few years, a large majority of Illinois citizens still wants state judges to be elected rather than appointed. The question asked of respondents is: "Right now, most state judges in Illinois are elected by the voters. Some people think judges should be appointed. Do you think state judges should be appointed by the governor, appointed by a special commission, or continue to be elected by the voters?" As shown in Figure 18:

- 67 percent of Illinoisans prefer continued popular election of state judges.
- Only 3 percent want to see judges appointed by the governor and 28 percent by a special commission.



The majority of citizens from all regions of the state endorse popular election of state judges. This includes 62 percent of Chicagoans, 56 percent from the rest of Cook County, 67 percent from the Collar Counties, 75 percent from other northern Illinois counties, 78 percent from central Illinois, and 77 percent from the southern part of the state (see Table 10).

Differences of opinion among party partisans are also small.

- Sixty-seven percent of Republicans favor continued election of judges, as do 71 percent of Democrats.

National Issues

Legalization of Drugs

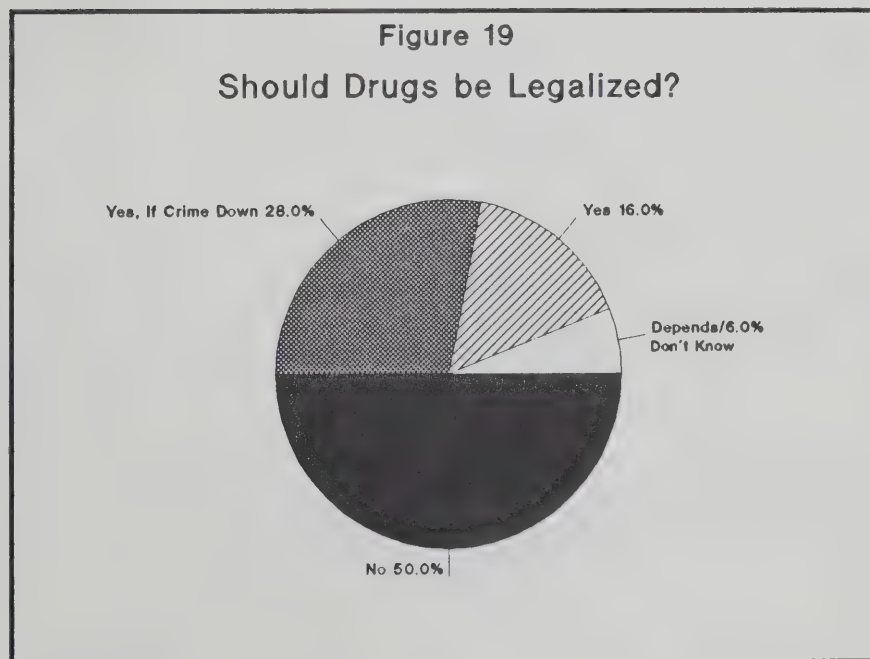
Drug legalization and government regulation have been discussed as a way to control the use of so-called street drugs, and reduce the crime associated with them. This issue has only recently been discussed, primarily by some large-city mayors. Its ramifications are not well known, and the public has not yet been exposed to many of the arguments, pro or con. Thus the questions posed in the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* should be viewed primarily as a baseline against which to measure opinion change as the public debate continues.

Figure 19 thus shows that 16 percent of the state's residents favor drug legalization without qualification. Another 28 percent would favor legalization if they were convinced the crime rate would go down, and 6 percent have other qualifications or are uncertain. This leaves 50 percent who oppose drug legalization.

Table 10
Election or Appointment of State Judges

	Governor Appointment	Commission Appointment	Elect	Don't Know	N
All	3%	28%	67%	2%	805
Region					
Chicago	5	31	62	2	210
Balance Cook	4	39	56	2	160
Collar Counties	7	24	67	1	140
Northern Illinois	0	24	75	1	71
Central Illinois	*	18	78	4	127
Southern Illinois	0	20	77	2	97
Political Party					
Republican	6	24	67	3	200
Democrat	2	25	71	2	276
Independent	3	35	61	1	239
Other, Won't Say	2	26	68	4	90

*Less than 0.5 percent.



- More than 80 percent of Illinois residents say they are opposed to the legalization of drugs such as marijuana, heroine, or cocaine.
- But opposition drops to a bare majority of 50.4 percent if citizens are convinced that drug legalization would result in a lower crime rate.

Although it appears that Illinois citizens are a long way from accepting legalization arguments, the substantial increase in support if legalization means a reduction in crime shows that many citizens are open to legalization considerations.

The Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance is one of this nation's most powerful patriotic symbols, and it was a major issue in the 1988 presidential campaign. The issues of patriotism and civil liberties, however, appear to have become muddled in the emotional heat of an election campaign. The 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* sought to disentangle these two issues by allowing respondents to reply separately to them. Figures 20 and 21 show that there are indeed two separate issues, and that citizens respond differently to each.

- 85 percent of the state's residents over the age of 17 think recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools is a good thing.
- But 73 percent also think the government should not require students to say it.

The overwhelming majority of residents of all demographic groups and from all sections of the state supports the pledge but opposes its imposition by the government. Dukakis voters--80 percent--were almost as supportive as Bush voters--93 percent. Bush voters--67 percent--were almost as opposed to government requirement as Dukakis voters--77 percent.

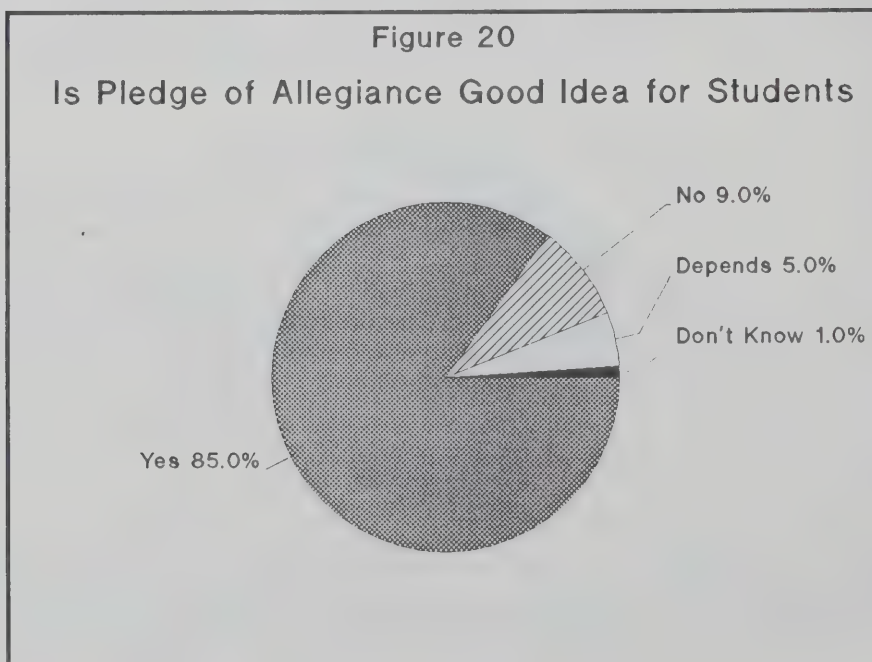
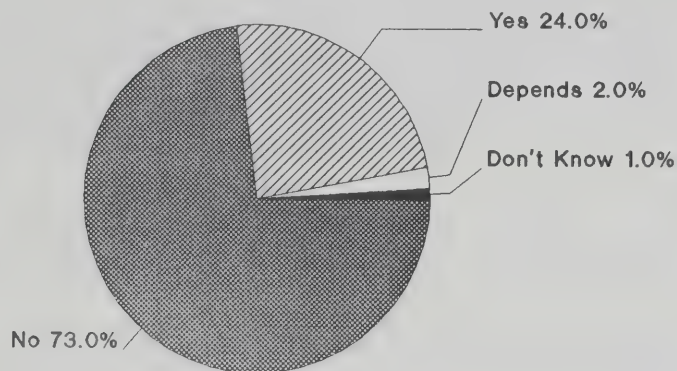


Figure 21

Should Government Require
Student Recitation of Pledge?



Summary

Illinois citizens disagree about water priorities during a time of drought and whether the language of insurance policies should be regulated by the state or left to the companies themselves. There seems to be general agreement, however, that contrary to the current practice of funding mass transportation in the Chicago area and downstate highways in tandem, each should be separately funded. There also appears to be general agreement that state judges should continue to be elected by the voters. There has been a gradual increase over the years in support of limiting the governor to two terms in office. Perhaps surprisingly, identifiers of both political parties support the idea of limitation about equally.

In surveying opinion on two items with a national focus, the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* found, first, that most Illinoisans oppose the legalization of street drugs. Opposition falls fairly substantially, however, when the possibility of a reduction in crime is introduced. This suggests that the fear of crime is stronger than opposition to drugs and that the citizens of Illinois are open to legalization arguments if there is convincing evidence of positive trade-offs between drug legalization and other perceived societal evils. This is an area of public opinion that bears watching in the future.

Secondly, on an issue that is no longer a subject of public debate, but is interesting in what it tells about the muddling of patriotic and civil liberty themes, Illinois citizens show that they deeply revere the patriotic symbolism of the flag and its pledge, but they do not want the government telling them how to show their patriotism.

Political Issues

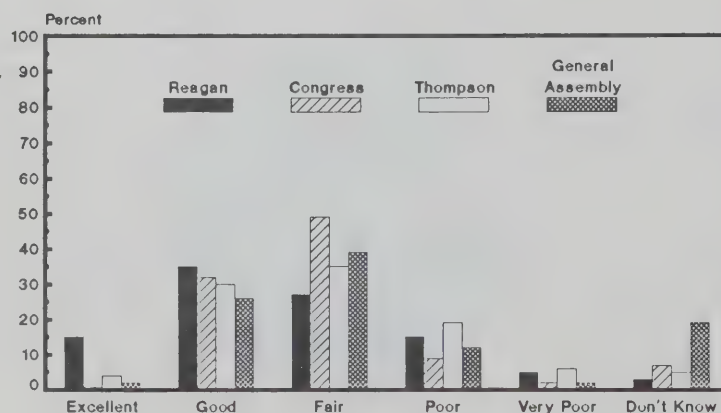
Ratings of Public Officials in 1988

Respondents to the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* were asked to rate President Reagan, Governor Thompson, the United States Congress, and the Illinois General Assembly. President Reagan was the most popular. He received the highest proportion of both excellent and good evaluations (see Figure 22). Given their higher visibility as chief executives, both the president and the governor received higher proportions of either excellent and good or poor and very poor ratings than did the two legislative bodies. Congress and the Illinois General Assembly both received the highest proportions of fair ratings and "don't know" responses. The work of the General Assembly, in particular, was unknown to many citizens.

- 50 percent of Illinois citizens think President Reagan did a good or excellent job in 1988.
- 34 percent feel Governor Thompson did a good or excellent job in 1988.
- Most Illinois citizens think Congress is doing either a good job (32 percent) or a fair job (49 percent).
- The majority of Illinoisans think the General Assembly is doing either a good job (26 percent) or a fair job (39 percent).
- Almost one in five citizens, however, does not feel informed enough to evaluate the work of the state's legislative body.

Figure 22

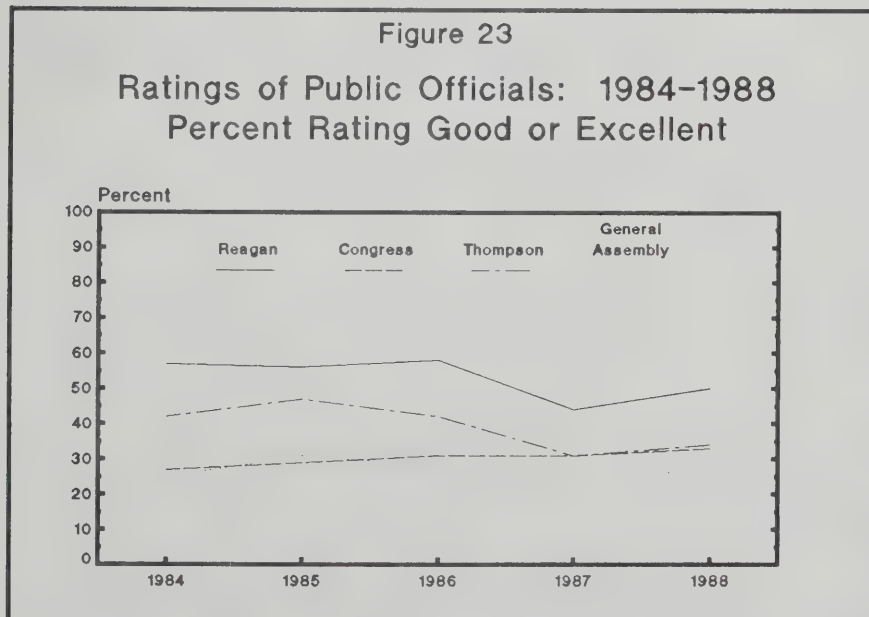
1988 Ratings of Public Officials



Ratings of Public Officials Over Time

Figure 23 shows the good and excellent evaluations of the same four officials and institutions from 1984, the year of the first *Illinois Policy Survey*, to 1988. With the exception of Congress, there was a significant decrease in these positive ratings from 1986 to 1987. Various events on the national scene, such as the Iran-Contra controversy, and on the state scene, such as the debate over Governor Thompson's tax increase proposals, were probably responsible for the lower ratings that year. The healthy economy and absence of major international problems or domestic controversies probably explain the increase in the popularity of all the officials in 1988. The rise in the good and excellent evaluations were all quite small, however, and again with the exception of Congress, they do not reach the levels of previous years. Congress has received a slow but steady increase in good and excellent ratings over the years of the Illinois poll.

- President Reagan's good and excellent ratings were exactly at the 50 percent mark in 1988, compared to a high of 58 percent in 1986 and a low of 44 percent in 1987.
- Governor Thompson received his highest good and excellent ratings (47 percent) in 1985, and has received these high evaluations from about a third of the state's citizens in the past two years.
- Congress has seen a slow increase in its high ratings, from 27 percent in 1984 to 33 percent in 1988.
- The Illinois General Assembly tends to receive the highest ratings from a little over a fourth of the state's citizens each year.

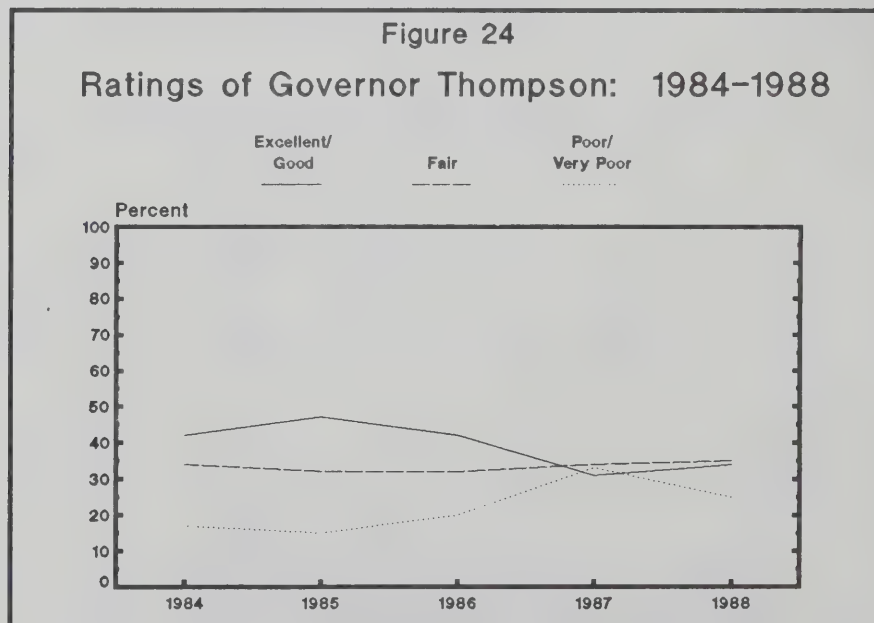


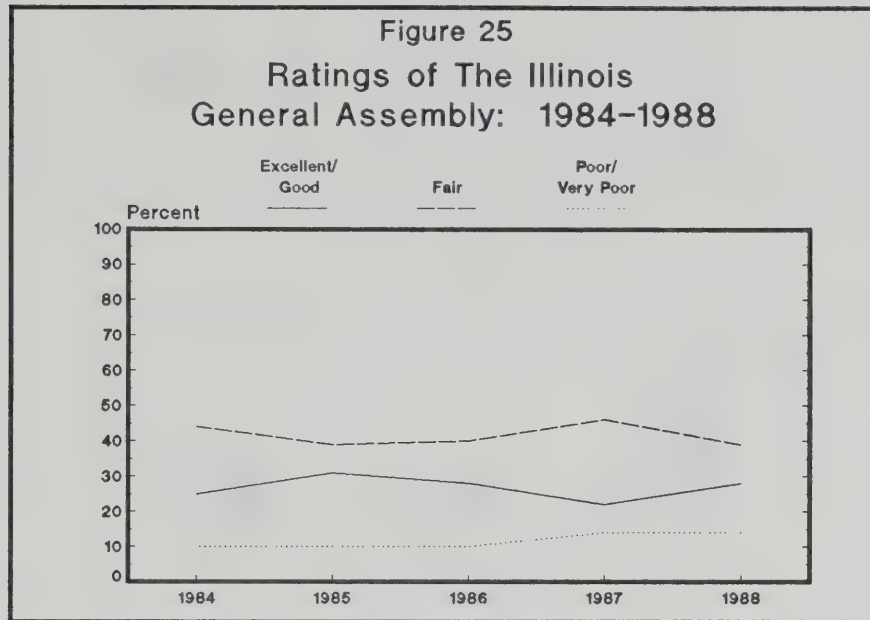
Figures 24 and 25 show in more detail the ratings over time of Governor Thompson and the Illinois General Assembly, respectively.

- The proportion of citizens rating the governor as fair has been steady over the past five years.
- The percentage rating the governor as good or excellent converged with the percentage rating him as poor or very poor in 1987.
- In 1988, there was a nine-point spread between the highest and lowest ratings for the governor.
- Differences in ratings of the General Assembly over time have tended to be quite small.

Citizens' Attitudes Toward National, State, and Local Government

In the federal system of government in the United States, citizens relate to three levels of government. They often have quite different opinions about each level. Furthermore, these attitudes can change, as the relationships among the levels of government themselves change over time. For instance, the federal system has undergone 20 years of New Federalism since 1968. Under the policies of the Nixon-Ford Administration (1968 to 1976) and the Reagan Administration (1980 to 1988), many national programs and funding responsibilities have devolved to the state government. A question that emerges from the change in intergovernmental circumstances is whether public opinion about the levels of government has changed.





The 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* asked two questions that can be used to assess intergovernmental attitudes of Illinoisans. Because one of these questions was also asked of a sample of Illinois citizens in 1968, there is a baseline measurement before the advent of the New Federalism against which to compare change in public opinion in the ensuing 20 years. The second question was also asked of a national sample in 1988, providing the basis of comparison between the attitudes of Illinoisans and the rest of the nation.

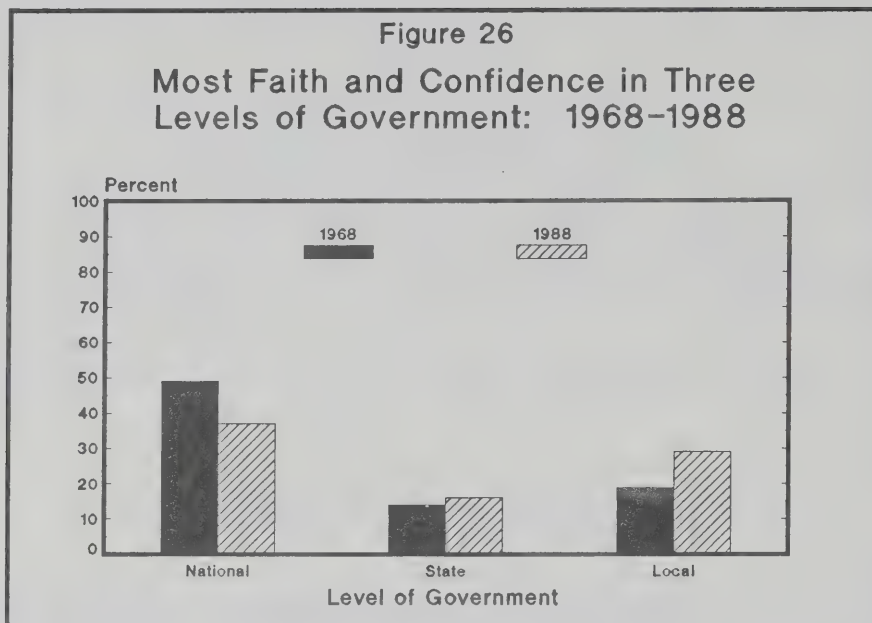
Faith and Confidence in Three Levels of Government

The actual wording of the first question is: "In general, do you have most faith and confidence in the national government, the state government, or your local government?" Figure 26 compares the responses to this question in the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* with those obtained in 1968.¹

- In 1988, 37 percent of Illinois citizens said they have the most faith and confidence in the national government, compared to 29 percent who have most faith in their local government, and only 16 percent who say the same for the state government.

In 1968, the order was the same; that is, Illinois citizens had the most faith and confidence in the national government, followed by local government, and state government last. In the 20 years between the two polls, however, the percentage of Illinois citizens who have the most faith and confidence in the national government dropped from 49

¹The 1968 sample consisted of 498 Illinois adults and was part of the Comparative State Elections Project conducted by the Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. For a description of the study and the sample, see Black, Kovenock, and Reynolds (1974).



percent to 37 percent and the percentage indicating the most faith and confidence in local government increased from 19 percent to 29 percent. There was virtually no change in the percentage indicating most faith in state government (The two point difference is considered a statistical tie). Thus,

- Local government has received almost all the fall-out from decreased faith and confidence in the national government since 1968, despite the increased responsibilities, greater activity, and increased professionalism of state government.

Table 11 shows that there are some demographic differences in the assessment of the three levels of government. First, confidence in state government decreases with age, but rises for local government with increasing age. All age groups perceive the national government similarly.

Contrary to what might be expected, a lower proportion of blacks than nonblacks has most faith and confidence in the national government. The percentages of both blacks and nonblacks who have the most faith and confidence in either state or local government are approximately the same. Over twice as many blacks, however, say they have no faith or confidence in any level of government. This high percentage is particularly significant because this reply was not suggested and respondents had to volunteer it.

- 38 percent of nonblacks have the most faith and confidence in the national government, compared to 24 percent of blacks.
- 20 percent of blacks volunteer that they have no faith or confidence in any level of government, compared to 8 percent of nonblacks.

Individuals with the highest levels of education and income have more faith and confidence in national government and less in local government than their counterparts, but there is no relation between education or income and assessment of the state level.

Table 11

**Most Faith and Confidence in Three Levels
of Government by Demographic Groups**

Demographic Group	Most Faith and Confidence in:				N
	National	State	Local	None	
All	37%	16%	29%	10%	805
Gender					
Male	37	16	29	10	386
Female	36	16	30	9	419
Age					
18-34	40	21	26	9	301
35-60	35	16	30	12	336
61+	35	8	35	6	168
Race					
Black	24	17	28	20	86
Nonblack	38	16	29	8	719
Education					
High School or Less	33	16	30	11	327
Some College	34	14	34	10	257
BA or More	45	17	24	7	221
Income					
Under \$21,000	30	19	30	12	218
\$21,000-\$42,000	37	14	32	9	309
\$42,000+	46	18	20	9	216
Geographic Region					
Chicago	42	20	19	13	210
Balance of Cook	32	19	32	8	160
Collar Counties	46	13	28	5	140
Northern Illinois	23	17	41	9	71
Central Illinois	33	8	39	12	127
Southern Illinois	32	19	30	9	97
Political Party					
Republican	43	18	26	3	200
Democrat	30	17	38	8	276
Independent	39	16	27	12	239
Other	37	9	19	23	90

Regional differences in assessment of the three levels of government are:

- Residents in Chicago (42 percent) and the Collar Counties (46 percent) have the highest percentages with the most faith and confidence in the national government.
- Northern Illinoisans have the lowest percentage showing the most faith and confidence in national government (23 percent).
- Regional percentages having most faith and confidence in state government are similar except for central Illinois, where only 8 percent have the most faith and confidence in state government.
- Local government is most popular in northern Illinois (41 percent) and central Illinois (39 percent), and least popular in Chicago (only 19 percent).

The comparison of assessments between Republicans and Democrats shows that Republicans prefer the national government more than Democrats do, and Democrats have more faith and confidence in local government than Republicans do. Both partisan groups have approximately the same percentages who have most faith and confidence in state government.

- 43 percent of Republicans have most faith and confidence in the national government, compared to 30 percent of Democrats.
- 38 percent of Democrats, compared to 26 percent of Republicans, have most faith and confidence in local government.

Returns for Tax Money from Three Levels of Government

Figure 27 compares responses from the 1988 Illinois sample with those from a national sample in the same year to the following question: "From which level of government do you feel you get the most for your tax money--national, state, or local?"²

There is a virtual tie among the three levels of government in both the Illinois and the national samples; that is, approximately a third of all Americans and a third of all Illinoisans think they get the most for their tax money from each level of government.

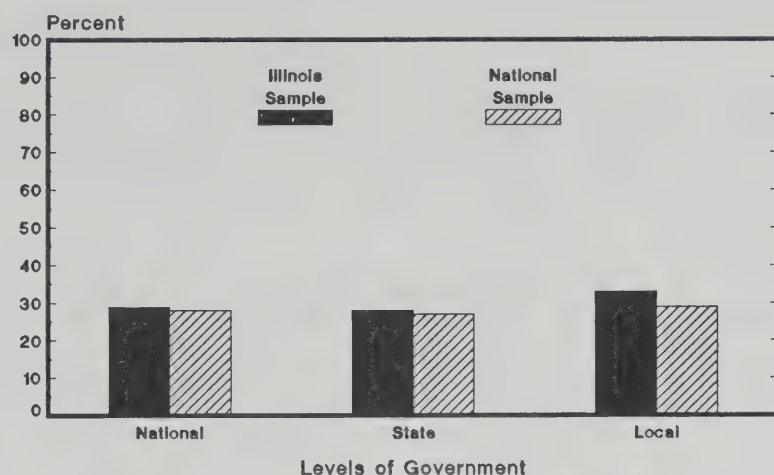
- 33 percent of Illinois citizens say they get the most for their tax money from their local government, 29 percent pick the national government, and 28 percent say the state government.

There are fewer demographic differences in the assessment of the three levels of government based on benefits for tax money than there are when assessment is based on faith and confidence.

²This survey is described in Dean (1988).

Figure 27

Which Level of Government Gives The Most for Tax Money: 1988 Illinois and National Samples



The following demographic differences stand out. (See Table 12 for complete demographic breakdowns.)

- Women (24 percent) are less likely than men to say they get most for their tax money from the national government (34 percent).
- The youngest age group is more positive than the other age groups about benefits for tax money at the state level.
- Black opinion is similar to nonblack opinion on return for tax dollars from the national and state governments, but blacks (22 percent) are less likely than nonblacks (35 percent) to say they get most for their tax dollars from local government.
- Individuals from northern Illinois (14 percent) and southern Illinois (23 percent) are the least satisfied with their tax return at the national level.
- Chicagoans are the least satisfied with their return from local tax dollars.

Summary

After receiving substantially lower percentages of excellent and good evaluations from the citizens of Illinois in 1987, President Reagan was rated more highly in 1988. The evaluations of the governor were marginally higher in 1988 compared to 1987. Neither chief executive was evaluated as highly in 1988 as in the period from 1984 to 1986. Congress has enjoyed a steady, if slow, increase in its evaluations from 1984 to 1988. The Illinois General Assembly tends to receive the highest percentage of individuals who do not feel well enough informed to evaluate it.

Table 12

Most for Tax Money from Which Level of Government

Demographic Group	Get Most for Tax Money from:				N
	National	State	Local	None	
All	29%	28%	33%	3%	805
Gender					
Male	34	25	34	3	386
Female	24	30	33	4	419
Age					
18-34	27	34	30	4	301
35-60	30	25	38	4	336
61+	30	22	31	3	168
Race					
Black	32	32	22	8	86
Nonblack	28	27	35	3	719
Education					
High School or Less	28	31	31	4	327
Some College	30	26	36	4	257
BA or More	29	27	34	2	221
Income					
Under \$21,000	28	32	26	4	218
\$21,000-\$42,000	27	28	36	4	309
\$42,000+	30	28	36	1	216
Geographic Region					
Chicago	32	33	26	4	210
Balance of Cook	32	22	36	4	160
Collar Counties	32	26	34	1	140
Northern Illinois	14	30	44	4	71
Central Illinois	28	25	35	4	127
Southern Illinois	23	34	33	3	97
Political Party					
Republican	29	32	30	2	200
Democrat	33	27	31	3	276
Independent	27	26	39	3	239
Other	20	26	34	7	90

A plurality of Illinois citizens have the most faith and confidence in national government. The next largest percentage chooses local government, and the lowest percentage picks state government. The percentage choosing the national government has decreased since 1968, and the percentage picking local government has increased. Despite increased responsibilities, spending, and professionalism by state government since 1968, the proportion of citizens indicating most faith and confidence in state government has remained virtually unchanged.

Although Illinois citizens distinguish among the levels of government as objects of faith and confidence, approximately equal percentages think they receive the most for their tax money from each government. In both perceptions--faith and confidence in government and benefits for tax dollars--there are differences among demographic groupings of citizens.

The whole area of the opinions and attitudes of Illinois citizens toward their three levels of government is one that should be pursued in future survey work. Citizens have divergent views about their various governments and some of the differences are clearly related to demographics. The reasons for these differences, as well as the reasons for the relatively low standing of state government, should be explored.

References

- Black, Merle, David M. Kovenock, and William C. Reynolds (1974). *Political Attitudes in the Nation and the States*. Chapel Hill: Comparative State Elections Project. Institute for Research in Social Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- Dean, Debra L. (1988). "Closing the Gap: State and Local Governments Fare Well in ACIR Poll." *Intergovernmental Perspective* 14: 23-24.

Appendix 1

Methodology

This study is based on a telephone survey of the Illinois adult population, aged 18 and older. The survey was conducted from November 9 to December 4, 1988. A total of 805 Illinois residents were interviewed. Interviews were conducted between 3:30 and 9:30 p.m. on weekdays, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and from 12:00 to 10:00 p.m. on Sundays.

The data were collected using the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewer (CATI) technique. A central polling site was used with supervisors monitoring the interviewers. The CATI system allows data to be entered into the computer during the actual interview process, improving the speed of data collection.

The sampling procedures used in this study allowed each telephone exchange in Illinois a proportionate probability of selection. Strict guidelines were set for the selection and replacement of telephone numbers. The result of these procedures is a random sample of all telephone numbers in the state of Illinois.

At each residence that contained an eligible respondent, the person to be interviewed was also selected randomly by a computer routine. If the selected respondent was not at home, a call back was arranged. Substitution was not allowed. Up to three call backs were made in an attempt to reach selected respondents. The combined result of these procedures is a representative statewide sample of the Illinois adult population accessible by telephone.

For the first time, the 1988 *Illinois Policy Survey* used a disproportionately stratified sample design. In previous years, respondents from each of the six state regions--Chicago; the balance of Cook County; the Collar Counties of DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will; northern Illinois; central Illinois; and southern Illinois--were chosen in proportion to the populations of each of these regions. This procedure resulted in cell sizes for northern and southern Illinois that were too small to be considered representative.

The actual numbers for each region for the 1988 data are: Chicago--196, balance of Cook County--120, Collar Counties--128, northern Illinois--123, central Illinois--119, southern Illinois--119. In order to be able to make statements about opinion in the state of Illinois, the file has been weighted to reflect the proportionate sizes of each region. Numbers of cases reported in the text and in figures and tables are the weighted numbers. To compute tests of statistical significance for regional comparisons, readers should use the actual cell numbers reported here.

Data are also weighted to restore equal probability of selection. The formula used included an adjustment for the number of adults in the household. Since telephone samples tend generally to oversample women and middle-aged individuals, an adjustment was also made to match gender-age combinations, as documented by 1987 census updates. The weighted sample was adjusted back to the actual sample size.

Sampling error for a sample of 805 individuals is plus or minus 3.5 percent. This is the range within which results from repeated samplings in the same time period would be expected to fall 95 percent of the time. Sampling error among subgroups (e.g., gender, region) will exceed 3.5 percent and will vary with the size of each group.

Appendix 2

Regional Map of Illinois

1. Chicago

2. Balance of Cook County

3. Collar

Lake	Will
McHenry	DuPage
Kane	

4. Balance of Northern Illinois

Boone	Whiteside	LaSalle	Rock Island
Winnebago	Lee	Grundy	Mercer
Stephenson	Ogle	Bureau	Putnam
Jo Daviess	DeKalb	Henry	Kendall
	Carroll		

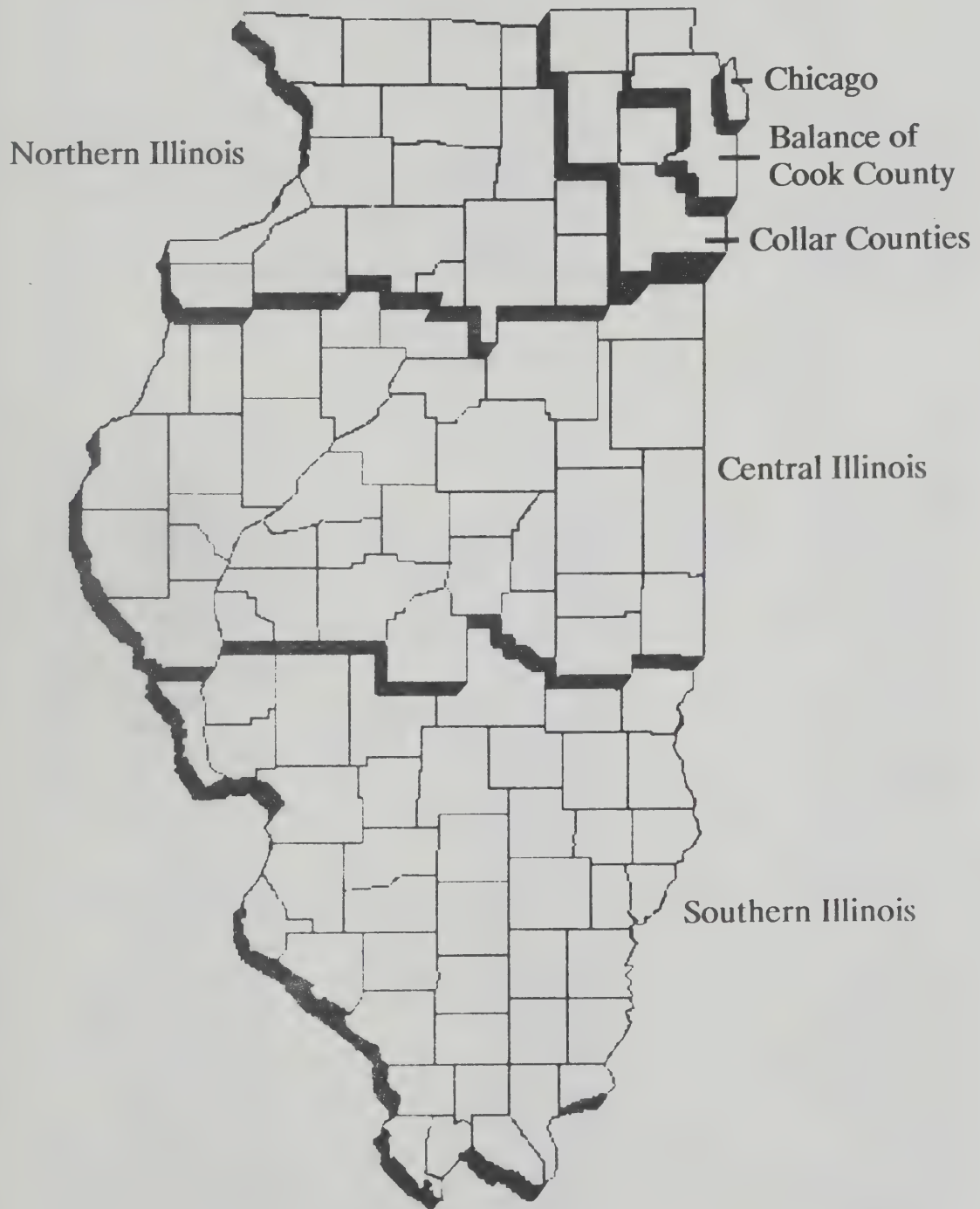
5. Central Illinois

Henderson	Iroquois	Hancock	Morgan
Warren	Ford	Adams	Menard
Knox	McLean	Schuyler	Sangamon
Stark	Woodford	Brown	Tazewell
Marshall	Peoria	Pike	De Witt
Livingston	Fulton	Mason	Macon
Kankakee	McDonough	Cass	Christian
Piatt	Moultrie	Coles	Douglas
Champaign	Logan	Vermilion	Edgar
	Scott		

6. Southern Illinois

Calhoun	Crawford	St. Clair	Edwards
Greene	Jasper	Clinton	Wayne
Macoupin	Effingham	Marion	Jefferson
Montgomery	Fayette	Clay	Washington
Shelby	Bond	Richland	Monroe
Cumberland	Madison	Lawrence	Randolph
Clark	Jersey	Wabash	Perry
Franklin	Hamilton	White	Gallatin
Saline	Williamson	Jackson	Union
Johnson	Pope	Hardin	Massac
	Pulaski	Alexander	

Regional Map of Illinois



Appendix 3

Interviewer Acknowledgement

The Center for Governmental Studies gratefully acknowledges the hard work of the interviewing staff of the Public Opinion Laboratory. The following individuals participated in this data collection effort.

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